



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3433 07486451 7

1

1

NCN  
(500g)

1

7

NC

Good









STRANGE ADVENTURES  
OF  
A SUMMER TOURIST

---

A NOVEL  
BY GEORGE EDGAR GOOGINS.

---

*"What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it  
From action and Adventure."*

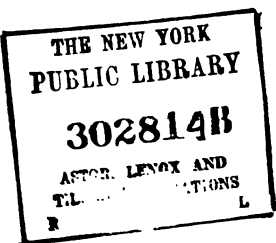
---

PORTLAND, ME.:  
MITCHELL & BICKFORD, PUBLISHERS.

1891.

VL

Geo



COPYRIGHT,  
1891,  
BY GEORGE E. GOOGINS.

*All rights reserved.*

Armed Forces of the Americas 10-15-30 417

# STRANGE ADVENTURES

OF A

## SUMMER TOURIST.

---

### CHAPTER I.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

It was the month of September. The year 18—. Rather late in the season for tourists, yet a large number of cottagers still hung about picturesque Mt. Desert, whose weird nooks and erratic outlines have long excited the curiosity of so many pleasure seekers.

Nearly all the guests of the hotels had now left Bar Harbor gayety behind them, and gone back to their usual haunts in the great bustling cities.

Many of the hotels had closed for the winter, and the proprietors had made their usual fall announcement that their doors would remain shut to the travelling public until the opening of another season. The summer had come and gone, and autumn had brought cool airs, frosty nights, bleak storms and violent winds, all of which had given the doughty little village of Bar Harbor a most blighted appearance.

Only a few tourists lingered. There was nothing about the general aspect of the quiet village in common with the summer, when the season of social gayety is at its height. Only an occasional buckboard rolled up the street, or might have been seen patiently awaiting the coming of some tourist before a cottage door, or standing idle in front of some hotel.

The harbor which always looks so gay and lively in the summer, with its hundred kinds of flotage, was now deserv

and nearly empty. A few yachts, however, were moored off the pier, all longing for a favorable north wind to come and blow them westward.

About the *table d'hôte* the guests were few, and the bevy of pretty servant girls, for which Bar Harbor hotels are all happily noted, had now received their summer earnings, and had returned to their country homes for the winter.

I had been a guest of the fashionable St. Sauveur, and had lingered, with several friends, until late into the season. In fact I had not arrived at Mt. Desert, until the latter part of August, just in time to see the gay and giddy coterie break camp, board the steamboats, crowd the trains, and with parting adieus to friends and landlords, leave for the west.

I was still at Bar Harbor.

The night on which my narrative begins was the most stormy for the season. The rain fell in torrents upon the earth, and great pools of water stood in the village streets. A high, fierce wind came madly rushing from the mountains, and shrieked and mourned around the house corners, and through the pine branches with mournful vehemence, now and then hurling great drops of rain spitefully against the window-panes. I had retired to my room at an early hour, and for a long time I sat reading one of Haggard's latest novels, whose weird contents seemed to be in perfect keeping with the wildness of the night outside. Once I became nervous, and went to my window and looked out. The darkness which I beheld was most dense. Only a few lights flickered from the windows of the neighboring cottages, while I heard the great sea roar hoarsely, as its boisterous waves thundered against the giant rocks along the craggy shores.

The wind which was already blowing with great velocity betokened a tempest before the morning.

"A wild night," I muttered, looking into the darkness; "and the storm is not yet at its height."

I quickly pulled down the curtains, in order to shut out the wildness of the night, now visible through the bright glare of the electric lights, and withdrew from the window.



At that moment I wished myself many miles from Mt. Desert, back to my comfortable quarters on Fifth Avenue. The wind roared around the corners of my hotel, down the chimney tops, and screamed loudly, as it swept with almost lightning velocity, through the pouring rain and the darkness. The gale was increasing each moment.

The night was that of the twenty-second of September, in the year aforesaid. That day, the sun had crossed the equinox.

Once more I got up, and looked into the deserted streets from my window. The storm had now set in for earnest, and I had begun to think of retiring for the night. I looked at my watch, and saw that it was only ten minutes of ten o'clock.

I took off my coat, and threw myself carelessly onto my bed, and being much interested in the book which I was perusing, I resumed my reading under the gas-light, directly over my head. I suppose I must have fallen asleep.

Methought once that I heard a low tap upon my chamber door. Pretty soon the knocking grew louder, and I raised myself up, and listened. "Wonder who can want me at this hour, and in such a dreadful storm?" I pondered:

"While I nodded nearly napping."

"Perhaps it is the night clerk?" I conjectured with myself. Finally I called out, "Well! what do you want?"

"Come! let me in old man, if you are up." The voice came loud and imperative, nevertheless I readily recognized it. The man calling to me was none other than Billy Mattocks, my friend, whom I had supposed at that moment was cozily quartered with the boys at the Manhattan club-rooms in New York city.

I was not long, as the reader can well imagine, in opening the door, and with the water dripping from his hat and clothing, my friend entered the room.

"Mattocks!" I cried in a voice of mingled joy and astonishment, "can it be possible that you are here?"

*My friend did not speak at first, but only grasped my hand warmly and smiled. "If it really be you," I add*

"remove your outer garments, and make yourself at home here."

"'Tis surely I——be not afraid," at last replied Mattocks, with his usual hilarity.

"How did you come?" I asked excitedly.

"By train to-night."

"For God sake!" I stammered, "what brings you here to-night? I had thought you comfortably quartered in New York. Sit down! tell me! what brings you here?"

"Why, my friend, business——business Rudolph," he answered with a smile.

"Business!" I exclaimed with surprise; "of what nature, pray?"

"Business of great importance. Wild speculations! Adventure! Gold!" replied Mattocks impetuously.

"Gold!" I cried with enthusiasm, "Adventure! speculation! what do you mean?"

"Be calm old man," said Mattocks, still keeping me in doubt; "Come down from your ethereal perch. I am going to surprise you still more before I have finished my story. Prepare yourself for an earthquake, which may gulp us both down!"

"An earthquake?" I asked.

"Be silent," commanded Mattocks softly. And then after a few moments of hesitation, he added: "I am going to reveal my plan to you."

"You have a scheme in mind?"

"Yes."

"Let me hear it," I said, waving my friend into a chair.

Mattocks had now removed his wet clothing, and become seated. Resting his left arm across the top of the little table, which made up an important part of the furniture in my room, and throwing the other arm mechanically over the back of his chair, he began to unfold a strange scheme.

*The storm had not yet abated outside, but was still increasing, and I could hear the big rain-drops pattering against my window with great violence. I listened with most breathless attention for nearly an hour to my friend,*

as he told me of the strange business that had brought him to Mt. Desert.

It was, indeed, a novel tale, and was destined to take us both through a multitude of perils in the future.

At first I only laughed at my friend's story, but as he proceeded I grew more attentive to what he was saying, and consequently more serious in his, "wild speculations!"—"Adventure!"—*et cetera*.

And the following is the story he told me:

"Rudolph," he began, "I am not dealing in real estate to-night."

"No?" I replied inquiringly.

"I am here," said the broker's son, looking at me earnestly —, "I am here to invoke your aid, your co-operation, as it were, in an important work. There are millions in the enterprise, which I shall propose to you. Riches and wealth untold will be ours if we succeed, and to win success we must succeed. What I shall propose to you is all a wild speculation, yet there is one chance in ten left for our success."

"Are not the odds greatly against us?" I asked, not yet knowing what my friend was driving at.

"Never mind. The odds are always against a man who speculates," replied the broker's son knowingly. "Men strike the right cards at times, however, and then they are sure to win big money. I tell you now that there is gold buried not a very great distance from this hotel, and it all belongs to those, who find it first!"

"What!" I cried, much astonished, "Gold buried here?"

"I am not joking," said my friend presently. "Will you aid me?"

"How?"

"Come into my company."

"What company? I am all at sea," said I, wondering what mystery my friend's words contained. "Tell me about it!"

"The 'E and L' Mining Company," replied Mattocks, *not withdrawing his cigar case, and offering me a fine Havana*



"Tell me about it," I repeated, after I had lighted my cigar.

"This company," said he, "is composed of wealthy capitalists like Henry Nelson, Huson Van Dyck and myself. It now only needs your assistance to make it one of the strongest companies financially in the country," and he threw me a sly glance from under his dark eye lashes. "We have a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars, and forty thousand already subscribed. Our object is to discover the hidden treasures of Captain Kidd, the pirate king, which lies buried somewhere about Frenchman's Bay. In reference to this business, I have called on you to-night in such a storm. Just why I have chosen a wild night like this, I will explain directly. I have just left my friends, Van Dyck and Nelson, at the Grand Central hotel, and have been sent here to solicit your aid in achieving the important work which we have already undertaken. For each member of the enterprise there is an everlasting fortune, if we succeed."

"Nonsense!" said I, when my friend had finished, "surely you cannot be in earnest."

"Why not?" said Mattocks, gazing at me earnestly through the dense tobacco smoke which now filled my room.

"What proof can you give?" I asked in reply; "what inducements can you offer me to enter your wild cat company? The natives about here would take you for a lunatic, should you make them such wild statements, as you have just made me. Gold!—pooh!"

"Wait awhile, old man," said Mattocks impatiently. My remarks had perplexed him. "Do you know of an island hereabouts by the name of Iron Bound?" he asked.

I replied that I did, but all the time wondering what my friend might say next.

"Well," he continued earnestly, "strange as it may appear to you, it is certain that on that island is untold wealth."

"The deuce!" I replied cynically.

"*Sure! I am sure there is gold buried there,*" returned Mattocks positively. I only laughed at him, for his words seemed absurd. "Look!" said he, taking from his pocket

a small roll of parchment; and unfolding it before me, he again exclaimed, "See there!"

"What is it?" I asked indifferently.

"Simply a letter,——*passe-partout*, as it were, to the hidden treasures," my friend replied, curiously regarding me through the dense tobacco smoke.

The parchment was very old and crinkly looking, and the eruginous aspect of its surface evidenced that it had survived the storms of many years, and was a letter from the dead. The writing on it was irregular and obscure, and its edges were black with the mold and rust of years.

"Shall I read it?" Mattocks finally asked.

I nodded my assent.

"Listen!" said he, withdrawing himself from the table to a position near the light. And unfolding the parchment before him, he began to read.

#### THE LETTER.

HALIFAX, N. S., June, 17—.

*"To whom it may concern:—*

I am now an old man bent down with sin and age, and realize that my earthly course is nearly run. Before, however, my breathless body is lowered into the grave, I wish to make a confession of my sins, before all the world, and God. I will divulge a secret, which the world does not yet know, and which all men will be pleased to hear. My years of mortality are fast drawing to a close, and my hair is sprinkled with the snows of many years. My heart is most foul with my sins of the past, while on my hands is—— blood! Yet, I have always kept safely locked within my breast a secret, which I had at one time sworn never to impart to human ears. When I die I shall leave my secret as my only bequest to that world against which I have ever sinned. I have never before told it, lest the man whom I so feared in life might meet me, and punish me in death. I now kneel before the shrine of the Almighty a repentant man, and in order to atone for my wrongs against mankind I now disclose a secret, which has been kept from the wor

many years:—Toward the west, in a subterranean cavern, beneath an island, whose shores are iron bound, and whose sides of solid rock rise perpendicularly out of the sea, is buried a large quantity of gold—the plunder of Captain Kidd, the world's greatest pirate, and his crew of heartless men. There have been many stories circulated among men from time to time concerning the hidden plunder of the great pirate king, but all these reports are false. What I now write about the bold pirate king can be relied upon by men as truth. The gold is hidden in a place, where no mortal man can enter, without the aid of high destiny and fortune. The mystery, which enshrouds the place, no human mind can fathom or explain, without the assistance of high heaven itself. Without the revelation that I now make, the gold of Captain Kidd and his demon crew, could never be found. I am the only man surviving out of a crew of one hundred and fifty men, who sailed the voyages of piracy in the good old ship Adventure Galley sixty years ago. The island, under which the gold is buried, is one of a large group lying at the foot of many hills. The plunder was carried into the cave one dark, stormy night, in the month of September, in the year 16—. It was the line gale that was raging on that night, for that day the sun had crossed the equinox."

"A night like this!" I interrupted, having now become intensely interested in the story which my friend was unfolding.

"Exactly," replied the broker's son promptly. "But be patient, and hear the rest."

And then my friend continued:

"We were bound for New York, and our ship—the Adventure Galley, a vessel of thirty guns—had been driven by the storm into a large bay to the westward. Into the cavern, beneath the aforesaid island, whose inner abodes but *few living men ever penetrated*, went the cunning pirate *king and his faithful crew*, on this wild night, and buried *their plunder, which we had captured on the high seas, and taken from honest hands by force and blood*. I am told,

that Captain Kidd and his men drifted into the cave by accident, though it was their purpose to hide their gold in some secret nook about the island. On the southern side of the island, there is beneath the waters a large opening in the rocks, and when a heavy storm is raging, like the one which I have described, the sea breaks high over the island, and recedes to a great distance from the shore, leaving the aperture, which is the mouth of the cave exposed to the open air, so that one can enter into it. At such a time Kidd was driven into the cave by the sea, and by similar good fortune he and several of his crew escaped in their boat, and returned to the ship the same night. The remaining five men, including an intimate pal of mine by the name of Hendrick Vanderdonk, did not escape, but were left there in the cave, to die by hunger or extreme exposure. I was at that time a bold sailor lad in the Adventure Galley, and on this night was detailed for duty on board the ship. It was the Captain's intentions to return after his western voyage and get his gold, but soon after his arrival in New York, he went to Boston where he was arrested, carried to London and executed. Some of the sailors, among them myself, went back to the island, after the death of our Captain to obtain the plunder, but we found the cave firmly locked against us. The sea recedes here so as to leave the mouth of the cave open only once in every fifty years, when the same kind of a storm rages as on that night when Captain Kidd hid his gold. Every half century the cavern is capable of being entered even by mortal man, but only during the night-time between the hours of twelve and three when the storm rages with the same violence, every fifty years. This storm is always the line gale."

"The whole cavern is a great mystery, and many strange stories about it were told me by the men who returned to the ship alive. Leading from the main cave are innumerable under ground passages all of which I am told run in different directions. One of these passages, communicates with the place where the plunder was left by Captain Kidd before returning to the ship. Many places ha

been searched by penurious men, with the hope of finding the pirate's gold, but all searches have thus far proved fruitless. The person, who succeeds in gaining entrance into the main cavern, and chooses the right passage-way, will I believe be able to procure for himself and his posterity an everlasting fortune. It is a game of chance—a speculation. I have given in words all the knowledge I possess about the hidden treasures of Captain Kidd, the pirate, and I trust it may prove valuable information to him who may come into possession of this letter. May God forgive my sins, even at so late an hour, and bless him who finds this letter, for to him alone, will come the good fortune of finding the cave and the gold.

(Signed,) E. L."

"It is a hoax," said I, when Mattocks had finished.

"Wait a moment," replied my friend, withdrawing other papers from his pocket.

"Have you more evidence?" I asked.

"I am always prepared to prove my case," returned my friend,—the broker's son. "I want to tell you now," he added, "how I happened to get possession of this parchment."

I assured him that I would be most delighted to hear his story to the end, and my friend continued: "A sailor having been wrecked off the coast of Nova Scotia found this letter in an old hut of some fisherman, and kept it many years as a curiosity.

"Finally he got tired of seeing it around and gave it away to one of his shipmates, who carried it off to San Francisco, thence to Japan and back home again to New York. There the man was taken sick and died, and left this letter among his other personal effects. The captain of the vessel, in which the man had sailed gave the letter to my father several years ago, from whom I obtained it. I told Van Dyck and Nelson about it, and their curiosity as well as their ambition and enthusiasm was aroused. It is the opinion of all of us that the words herein contained, constitute the plain, outspoken confession of a serious and penitent man."

"Consequently, we are out for gold, and like all men of enterprise we have organized a joint stock company, called it the 'E and L' Mining Company for the purpose of carrying on secret operations in the caverns, which we believe do exist under Iron Bound Island. The success of our enterprise depends, first, in finding the entrance to the cave; second, in finding the right passage."

"It is just fifty years ago to-night," continued the broker's son, "since this coast was visited by just such a storm as this, being coincident with that which raged over the earth on the night when Captain Kidd buried his gold. What makes my conviction, that the letter is true the stronger, is the fact that this storm was predicted at Washington only a few days ago; and it is just fifty years to a day since there has been such a storm as described in the letter of E. L. This prediction gave us all hope, and strengthened our confidence in the contents of the letter. Our company has been organized, and our whole expedition formed and fitted out, and now ready to start from these shores for the hidden treasures of the great pirate, to-night, before this storm abates. My friends have sent me here to ask you to participate in the enterprise. What do you say to it?"

"Are you really in earnest?" I asked.

"I was never more so in all my life," answered my friend, rising suddenly from his chair, and beginning to pace the floor of my room nervously. "I tell you Rudolph Sanborn," he added with a violent gesture, at the same time throwing himself into his chair, "that this is our last opportunity for striking it rich. Beneath Iron Bound Island there is gold. To-night, we shall be able to find the entrance to the main cave, but after this storm has subsided it will be locked against us forever. Will you come?"

"You say the opening appears only once in fifty years?" I asked contemptively.

"That is what the letter states," said Mattocks.

"Horrors!" I ejaculated, "How are we ever to return? What will gold or great riches avail us, if we are to remain dead to the world, for all these years?"

"Hugh! Never mind, old man, but that we can ferret ourselves back to daylight. Gold will stimulate us, and drive us through the solid rock, if need be," my friend replied. And Mattocks went on to say: "To get into the cave is the difficulty, or as Hamlet might say were he here:— 'Aye, boys, there's the rub.' Once let us get into the cavern, however, and the gold is ours."

Mattocks spoke earnestly, like one having great confidence in that which he is about to undertake.

"But my friends at home," I stammered, "what will they think has become of me, if I do not return next week, as I wrote them I should?"

"They know all," replied my friend. I jumped to my feet.

"What! all?" I cried in a tone of great surprise.

"Don't think," said Mattocks coolly, "that I have left any stones unturned, for I have not. My whole soul is in this adventure."

For some time I stood meditating, and finally asked: "How much money shall I be required to put down?"

"An equal amount with the rest of us, *five thousand dollars.*"

"All right" said I, "when do we start?"

"At once," replied Mattocks, throwing himself into his overcoat.

"Get your things ready, and prepare yourself for an eventful night."

"*Jacta est alea!*" I cried, and hastened to join my friend who was preparing himself for the storm, that was raging outside.

The letter was so plausible, my friend believed so tenaciously in the realization of its promises, and admitted so imperturbably the existence of the gold, that I was quickly persuaded to put down the amount of capital called for, and joined the expedition.

*I had such implicit confidence in my friends, and so much faith in the coincidence of storms, that my belief in the realization of the things hoped for from the enterprise was*

doubly strengthened, and I became a most easy victim to my friend's plausible stories; and I surrendered myself up entirely to his wild cat scheme.

I packed my clothing, such as I thought I might need for a journey of that kind, though I had no earthly conception of the place to which I was going, and with my friend I prepared myself to meet our party at the Grand Central Hotel.

I was told by Mattocks that no time should be lost. The storm was still howling furiously outside, and when I opened the door which led from the hotel into the street, the wind, by a sudden gust, dashed the rain into my face with great fury, and nearly blinded my eyes. I shut the door with a bang, and hesitated for a moment. The night clerk of the hotel looked at us with puzzled if not suspicious eyes. It was indeed a wild speculation, that which we were about to enter; and an adventure for which my mind felt but little affinity.

I had almost made up mind to return to my room, and the words by which I meant to express my withdrawal from the expedition were on my lips.

At that moment, however, my friend opened the door again, and shouted, "come on!" And buttoning up my coat tightly about me, I impulsively followed him into the storm.

---

## CHAPTER II.

"But longer did we not retain much hope;  
For what obscured light the heavens did grant  
Did but convey unto our fearful minds,  
A doubtful warrant of immediate death."

I HAD found everything pertaining to the expedition in readiness, and even our boats and men were already awaiting us at the shore, a short distance below the village.

*The whole undertaking was a great surprise to me, and so unreal did the events of this night seem, that I could*



hardly tell whether I was awake, or in some strange dream.

The expedition had been previously planned, and premeditated without my knowledge; and everything necessary for the accomplishment of the bold purpose of the company had been carefully prepared in New York, and transported overland to Mt. Desert, without having aroused the suspicions of any outside parties, not even the railroad authorities. All preparations had been made in secret, and each move made by the company constituted a mystery in itself.

I had walked to the Grand Central Hotel with my friend in the drenching rain like one in a trance. Neither of us had spoken. A few minutes later I was ushered into the presence of my friends, Van Dyck and Nelson, who now sat earnestly talking over their quixotic plans before a brilliant wood fire, which was roaring and snapping on the open grates. I was greeted by them most cordially, and after a general hand shaking and a few preliminary remarks about the storm, and the enterprise which they had undertaken, I was offered a glass of brandy in order to stimulate my nerves, which I drank hastily, and soon after, I put my autograph to a check for five thousand dollars on the——bank of New York city, and sat awaiting further orders. In the meantime, I had become a full-fledged member of the 'E and L' Mining Company, so-called.

Twelve o'clock came. The storm was still raging through the deserted streets of the village, while the rain descended in torrents, flooding the earth everywhere. The electric lights throughout the town flashed luridly in the darkness, and the ghosts of the night walked about or danced weirdly, as though science were aiding nature in heightening the terror of the night.

It was half-past twelve, Wednesday morning, when we silently stole from the hotel to the shore. Three long whale boats rested high and dry upon the beach, all of them loaded deeply with the outfit of the expedition. Our stores had *been prudently selected and procured in New York, and mechanically packed into the boats.*

*There were four oarsmen and a cockswain to each boat. I told, our company numbered nineteen men. When we*

arrived at the shore, we had found the sailors waiting for us, and all were anxious to execute the commands of their officers. Not a word was spoken among the sailors, and they moved about silently like some phantom crew. All commands were given in an undertone or in a whisper, and were promptly executed notwithstanding the almost deadly perils that awaited them among the breakers.

The sea groaned hoarsely, and dashed against the shore with much violence, throwing its foamy spray high into the air.

The undertaking seemed to me most perilous. To launch the boats in such a sea was a feat difficult to perform. The boats, however, were all manned by expert oarsmen, who had been procured at a huge expense from the United States Life Saving service, and their skill in handling the boats was something marvellous to behold.

I stood upon the shore watching the sailors manœuvre in strange bedazzlement. Once I spoke to Mattocks about the marvellous skill with which these men manipulated their oars in handling their boats, after I had seen the first boat shoot off among the dangerous rocks into the seething surf.

"Why," said my friend, "these men are all experts—picked men. Watch the second!"

Just then another boat, loaded with stores, pushed off from the shore onto the raging billows, and by the light which just then flashed from the rigging of a vessel lying at anchor further up the bay, I could see the boat move safely away from the perilous rocks, and once or twice tossing its beak into the air, it bounded away.

At this juncture I was forced to repeat in my mind the familiar lines:

"One by one they go  
Into the unknown dark."

The third boat was at length launched which was to transport to the island the officers of the expedition. I was told to get into the boat, and was given a seat in the stern near the cockswain, Tommy Scott by name, and was request

by the sailors to keep quiet. Never shall I forget the sensation that I experienced on that night, as I felt myself moving into the extended jaws of the angry sea, and heard the bottom of our boat grinding and scraping upon the hard pebbles and sharp ledges beneath us. The darkness was impenetrable, and as we proceeded on our course the heavens were occasionally illuminated by quick flashes of lightning, and heavy thunder rolled along the southern sky making the night most hideous. The tempest was fearful! The sailors pulled away assiduously at their oars, and the shore was soon left behind us.

Mattocks sat directly on my right, and gave the necessary orders concerning the course to be sailed to Scott, the cockswain, while Nelson and Van Dyck were in the bow of the boat on the lookout.

Once I spoke to Mattocks about the storm, and he answered me promptly, and in a firm tone of voice that affirmed his great confidence in the good results of the expedition.

I was thinking of the other boats that had preceded us, and had said to my friend: "How are the other boats to find the island?"

"Each cockswain has been provided with a small chart such as I have here," replied he, unfolding the paper before me. "Every man knows the course to the island."

I expressed my gratification for the manner in which everything had been so ingeniously planned, and said nothing more.

A half hour more passed, when Van Dyck cried out: "Hark!"

The men stopped rowing immediately, and we all listened attentively.

"There! Don't you hear it?" again asked Van Dyck.

Every man heard the sound, and in spite of the loud groans of the sea, and the terrific peals of thunder that rent the heavens, the air was filled with cries and groans of men such as I never before heard, nor since.

*Mattocks was frantic.* "Pull away, my braves!" he cried *excitedly*, "*our boats are in danger.*"

The cries sounded afar off, and soon ceased. We were fast nearing the island. After a lapse of a few moments the cries were renewed even more piteously than before, and the voice of one crying for help rang out most audibly across the raging billows now running mountains high in the outer bay.

"Pull away, my lads!" said Mattocks to the oarsmen almost hysterically, as he seized the helm from Scott and acted himself as cockswain.

"Pull away! the men are in danger," he commanded. The waves murmuring among the neighboring rocks answered the call for help, and nothing human was heard again from out the darkness.

"The boats have very likely struck on the outer end of the island, and been lost," I said to Mattocks after the cries had ceased.

"I am afraid they have," he replied despondently.

"Then the expedition must fail?" said I inquiringly.

Mattocks made no reply to my last question. He was miserable. I said nothing more to him, because I saw that his mind was undergoing at that moment inexplicable agony. I heard him tell the men to row on; and it was sometime before he spoke to me again. When he did speak it was only to reprimand himself for the active part he had taken in the organization of the expedition. Said he wretchedly: "If our enterprise fails here, then, I am responsible for all this waste of money and loss of life."

He said no more, but kept the men pulling away for their lives. By the loud roar of the breakers near by I knew that we were now nearing the island, and unless the sailors should succeed in keeping our boat some little distance away from the shore, the sea and wind would drive us onto the rocks, and we should all be lost, like our companions, who had preceded us in the perilous undertaking.

I looked at my watch, and saw that it was precisely half-past two o'clock. There were no signs of daylight yet visible in the sky, and the dense darkness that usually precedes daylight, had absolutely shut out everything from human

eyes. I could not even see Nelson in the bow of the boat, so dark was the night.

Again I spoke to Mattocks. Said I: "If our companions have perished and our provisions been lost, we had better return rather than to risk our lives among these pesky rocks."

My courage was evidently waning. I had been drawn into the adventure by the persuasive tongue, and earnest solicitations of my friend, and my impulsive nature had been easily victimized by the expectancy of possessing immediate wealth. The heavy rain of the night, and the boisterous seas upon which I was tossing, had dampened my ardor for gold, and my desire for adventure. But this slight discouragement, after all, was only the signal for renewed enthusiasm in the enterprise; and, as the events of the night came and went, my heart grew stronger in the hope of gaining something, at least, from the speculation into which I had madly rushed. It might be the gain of wealth, perhaps only that of experience. At no time, however, did I entertain very strong faith in the future realization of Captain Kidd's gold. I had been drawn into the dilemma, and was now determined to see what the affair all meant. The other boats were evidently in danger and needed our assistance, so that believing that I had been sent here on this night for some great purpose, I urged my companions to take heart, and row on, taking great precautions in keeping a safe distance from the rocks, for I knew that our boat was most seaworthy, and would live anywhere in an open sea.

After awhile the darkness grew thinner, and the rain ceased, so that the outline of the island became clearly visible. We discovered that we were at the extreme eastern end of the island, and I suggested to Mattocks that we turn our boat around and row back a short distance.

"But where do you suppose the other boats have gone? Do you think they have all been lost?" asked Mattocks anxiously.

*"I cannot tell," I replied dubiously. "We must search for them."*

*"Keep closer in toward the island," said Mattocks to the men.*

"This is pesky business," said Van Dyck, disheartened by our perilous situation.

"We shall all be drowned here together, I know we shall," he cried in despair.

"Keep up good courage, my friend," I heard Nelson say to Van Dyck. "To abandon hope is to relinquish all."

"Why do we not turn back and give up this crazy enterprise?" again asked despondent Van Dyck, who, strange though it may seem, had been the first to see millions in the speculation.

"Don't be a fool," returned the indomitable Nelson, reproving his disheartened friend.

"No," said I, "let us not get discouraged, but bear up under our danger cheerfully. We have now been transformed into a relief expedition, and must try to do good by finding our lost companions." As I spoke, a bright flash of lightning swept across the clouded sky, which was immediately followed by a deafening crash of thunder. "A sail! ho, a sail!" cried Nelson, who was on the lookout for breakers.

"Sure enough,—a sail!" said I. "The ship is sailing dead into the island, and will be lost."

All eyes were now turned toward the vessel, which we saw only a short distance away under full sail, notwithstanding the fearful gale, heading directly toward the rocks.

Even in the dense darkness of the night there hung about this ship a halo of pale light, so luminous, however, that her hull and masts, as well as her sails and rigging were perfectly visible. There was only one man on deck that we could see, and he stood in the bow of the ship.

"A man-of-war," said one of the sailors.

On her bow was painted in big, white letters her name, —*Adventure Galley!*

"Captain Kidd's ship! See there! He is pointing us toward the island. Row on, my braves!" cried the broker's son, who was at the tiller.

*Mattocks* was overcome with enthusiasm, or fear I could not just tell which. Certainly there was a ship—a man-of-war before our very eyes, bearing down upon the island

I called out in a loud voice: "Ship, Ahoy!" There was no reply, and my voice echoed afar over the seas.

"Tis a phantom ship!" exclaimed the superstitious Van Dyck. "She is a harbinger of death."

The sailors had all become frightened, and stopped rowing. The ship with every sail set sailed steadily on, and we anxiously watched her, believing in another moment that she would strike the gigantic rocks not twenty feet ahead of her, and be dashed into a thousand pieces.

Another flash of lightning illuminated the heavens and blinded our eyes momentarily, and in the utter darkness that followed we saw nothing of the vessel. She had mysteriously disappeared. Terror seized the hearts of all, and brave men stood aghast. None of us escaped being frightened at the strange appearance and sudden disappearance of the ship, not even the fearless Mattocks, the broker's son, nor Nelson, the daring speculator of Wall Street fame, who had often seen the frail barks of unfortunate men strike the rocks of ill-luck and misfortune, and go down to the bottom of life's great sea. The sailors, who had often been obliged to meet the perils of the sea when called upon to save property and life from the destructive waves, all lost heart to a man, and quailed before the apparition which they had just now beheld.

They feared not so much the waves and the storm, but the unexpected sight of the phantom ship appalled them, so that they were exceedingly frightened.

Our boat soon became unmanageable, and I realized how perilous was our present situation, when I saw that we were inevitably drifting on to the rocks. Suddenly our boat was struck in the stern by a powerful sea, which pitched us forward, throwing Scott our cockswain headlong into the water, much to our sorrow and dismay.

"A man overboard!" I yelled loudly, and in a tone which evidenced great excitement.

"*Throw him an oar!*" shouted Mattocks fiercely, again *grasping the tiller.*

"*He is lost,*" murmured the half-distracted Van Dyck.

For an instant all was confusion, and the men began to jump about and jostle against the side of the boat, so that in their excitement and eagerness to rescue their companion they very nearly succeeded in capsizing the boat and throwing us all into the sea.

"Sit down!" roared Mattocks, "you will upset the boat."

Every man but one had thrown his oar overboard in attempting to rescue the cockswain, who had so mysteriously disappeared when he fell into the sea. He had been pitched from the boat and we did not see him again on top of water. We had now but one oar, our rudder was broken, and we were left entirely at the mercy of the waves, which I supposed each moment would swallow us. I said to Mattocks, "Here is a pretty mess; no sails, no rudder and no oars, to say nothing of a frightened crew of men. We shall all be lost, and go down to watery graves together."

Deadly perils threatened us on every hand, and no sooner would we get our boat from the dangers of Charybdis than she would be drifting headlong into Scylla. I was provoked with my companions, and disgusted with the conduct of our sailors, who now seemed almost frightened out of their wits. I was mad;—mad with myself for having ever entered into such an enterprise. I believe I was at that time mad with all the world.

We were fast drifting into the island among the breakers and a thousand dangers; and it seemed to me that it was only a matter of another moment when we should be dashed against the rocks, and thrown promiscuously into the hissing waters.

At that instant the boat was lifted upwards by a violent sea, and we felt ourselves ascending a mountain of waters. We reached the summit of the great wave, and then began to descend with great velocity. Down, down, down, down we went, until I thought we would never stop, our boat neither pitching nor rocking, but maintaining an easy motion, so that we imagined ourselves floating in the air. We were all frightened, and the sailors thinking that their last hour had surely come, turned pale, and uttered loud cries that rent the air, and made my heart grow sick.



We were still on the descent, when marvelous to relate, our boat suddenly fetched up with a jerk that pitched us all into the bow, and for a moment we lay there piled up together. Pulling myself out from under my companions, I exclaimed quite unconsciously, "We have struck!"

"I should say that we had been struck by a cyclone," replied Mattocks with his characteristic *jeu d'esprit*; and then he leaped to his feet and exclaimed to the men, "Push the boat off the rocks!"

"She is hard stuck, sir," I heard one of the sailors reply.

"The sea has subsided," said Van Dyck, after he had come to his senses.

"There is no water here," said I, feeling about on the ledges, and once or twice trying with the men to right the boat up again. They had all regained their courage, and were trying to push the boat off the rocks, but could not.

"We are on the beach," I said finally.

"Let us haul the boat up and reconnoitre," said Mattocks.

"But where is Nelson?" I asked, looking around for my friend.

"I don't know——isn't he here? Nelson!——Nelson!" Mattocks had become anxious about our friend, and called to him when he did not see him on his feet with the rest of us.

Nelson had been on the lookout up forward with Van Dyck, and I feared that the sudden concussion that our boat had received when she struck had seriously injured our friend, if not instantly killed him.

I went quickly forward, and saw the form of my friend lying where he had been thrown into the extreme bow of the boat among anchors, chains and ropes. I laid my hand on him, and spoke to him: "Come Nelson, old fellow: get up and light your lantern! The boys are going to explore this place."

But my friend, the speculator, did not answer me.

## CHAPTER III.

"Oh, hateful error! melancholy's child,  
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men  
The things that are not."

THE "E and L" Mining Company, alluded to elsewhere in this volume, was organized in a novel way one night, in one of the private rooms at the Manhattan Club House in New York City. I was not, as the reader already knows, present on the aforesaid occasion, but nevertheless I was one of the charter members.

The whole thing came about in the following way: Billy Mattocks had promiscuously dropped into the club-house one rainy afternoon, on his way home from his father's real estate office on Wall Street. Here he met his friend, Huson Van Dyck, with whom he had some conversation about the letter, which he had that very day obtained from his father, and was then carrying home to place among his collection of antiques in his private museum.

When Van Dyck had heard the letter read to him by Mattocks, his impulsive nature had been set all aglow; and he became all at once enthusiastic and intensely interested in it, as his friend proceeded to tell him how he came into possession of the letter, and whence it originated *et cetera*. He asked Mattocks to bring it round to the club that evening and show it to the boys; and the other had consented.

It was one evening in the latter part of August. The exact date I have forgotten. Comfortably seated about a small card table in one of the rooms of the club-house were three young men, Huson Van Dyck, Henry Nelson, and Billy Mattocks,---all of them sons of wealthy men, and unmarried. Nelson was already in business for himself, and had earned quite a reputation as a successful speculator among his Wall Street associates.

They were on this evening discussing the letter signed E. L., and which had so strangely turned up after the lapse of so many years. Little did they dream of the perils and adventures, which this letter was destined to take them through

in the future, as they sat here in their comfortable quarters on this evening talking over the affair. The letter had much the same effect on the mind of Nelson as on that of Van Dyck, and the former had begun to ask his friends a thousand questions concerning it,—none of which either Mattocks or Van Dyck could definitely answer. He asked:

"And where is this island spoken of by this mysterious E. L.?"

"At the foot of many hills," Van Dyck replied with witticism.

"No fooling, Van," Nelson returned seriously.

"The letter," said Mattocks, who had been meditating, "states that the gold is buried on an island to the westward."

"West of what point?" asked the philosophic Nelson.

"West of Halifax I presume, that being the place where the letter is dated."

Nelson arose from his chair and walked slowly across the room, his head slightly bowed as if in a deep study. Finally advancing toward the others, and resuming his seat at the table, he asked:

"Boys, were you ever at Mt. Desert?"

"Two seasons," promptly answered Van Dyck.

"I can beat you, Van, by one season," said Mattocks jovially.

"Well; it is there that you will find the island mentioned in your letter," said Nelson.

"Impossible!" replied Van Dyck decidedly.

"Why impossible? I'll wager a new silk hat full of shekels that the island is in Frenchman's Bay. The letter states that the island lies at the foot of many hills. Why not Mt. Desert? Certainly, there is no other place on the whole Atlantic Coast where a designing man like Kidd would be more likely to bury his money than in Frenchman's Bay."

Nelson spoke fluently and earnestly. When he had finished, Mattocks, who had been pondering and weighing each word that his friend had spoken, said affirmatively; "I believe you are right."

"But the island?" Van Dyck queried a little doubtfully.

"There are many islands in Frenchman's Bay, you know Van," Nelson replied; "and all of them are exquisitely adapted to gold hiding."

"I had not thought of that before," said Van Dyck gravely.

"There is an excellent description of the island given in the letter. Here Nelson!—read the letter," said Mattocks again unfolding the parchment.

Nelson took the letter and looked at it a moment, as if puzzled. Then he passed it back to Mattocks, saying in a perplexed tone: "Take it! I can't read such hieroglyphics."

Mattocks took the letter and began to read: "Toward the west in a subterranean cavern beneath an island whose shores are iron-bound——"

"Hold!" cried Van Dyck, jumping to his feet; and with a knowing smile said, "No one ever went to Bar Harbor without hearing of Iron Bound Island."

"Certainly not. You agree with me then, that the island mentioned by E. L. is in Frenchman's Bay?" inquired Nelson.

"Entirely," replied Van Dyck emphatically.

"Now, then, let us sum up our facts and write our conclusion. The letter says that the gold is buried toward the west in a subterranean cavern beneath an island whose shores are iron-bound, and that it is one of a group of islands lying at the foot of many hills in an immense bay. What do we know? Frenchman's Bay is alluded to; Mt. Desert is meant by the many hills, and——"

"*Iron Bound* is the island," said Van Dyck, taking the words from Nelson's mouth.

"The description is so admirable,——so perfect," continued Nelson earnestly, "that I am inclined to believe that there is much truth in this letter of E. L., and that the story about Captain Kidd's gold has at last a sequel in this letter. See how well we have been able to locate the cavern,——if it really turns out that we are right,——by E. L.'s description, knowing as we all do something about the geography of Frenchman's Bay."

All sat meditating for a long time, as if each was studying out some plan or idea to offer to the others. Mattocks in the meantime carefully folded up the rusty old letter and put it back into his pocket. Nelson lighted a fresh cigar, and threw one leg carelessly over the end of the table and began to look comfortable. Van Dyck was in a deep study.

"Well boys," at last asked Mattocks, "what do you think of the letter?"

"Hush!" said Nelson looking at his friend soberly,—  
"Don't speak so loudly; someone may be listening."

"What of it?" asked Mattocks.

"The gold," replied the other seriously.

"Then you think that——"

"No; I do not think—I know," replied Nelson fervently. He continued: "In a cavern beneath Iron Bound Island down in Frenchman's Bay is hidden the plunder of the old pirate,—Kidd. I have faith in this letter. It is the earnest confession of a man who fears lest his soul may be in danger of eternal damnation. Here is afforded us an opportunity to make our individual fortunes. Who knows!"

"I am very sorry that I have an engagement to fulfil at ten o'clock," said Mattocks, slipping into his overcoat, and adjusting his silk hat on the top of his head. "I will meet you fellows here again to-morrow evening, if you say so, at sharp nine. Meanwhile you can talk the matter over among yourselves and let me know your plans."

"What does your father say in regard to the letter?" asked Van Dyck.

"He believes in it implicitly. Once or twice he has mentioned the matter to his friends, but as the cavern can be entered only at just such a time, he has never thought seriously of searching for the gold. Good-night, boys!"

"*Bon soir!*" returned his friends, as Mattocks left the room.

*Van Dyck and Nelson sat and talked the matter over until nearly midnight, after their friend had left them. Both were very enthusiastic over the letter. Said Nelson: "It seems reasonable, and I'll wager a thousand pounds of*

English gold, that the plunder of Captain Kidd is buried somewhere about Iron Bound Island. There is a story afloat among the natives of Mt. Desert that Captain Kidd buried some of his gold on Iron Bound Island."

"It must be true," Van Dyck answered presently.

"In that case there is a fortune awaiting us at that island. Why should we let it slip through our fingers?"

"Exactly. But I don't like the idea of staying in that cave fifty years. Let me see," continued Van Dyck contemplatively, "I am now twenty-five;—why, I should be seventy-five years old; and still unmarried—an old bachelor with a fortune behind me——"

"And all the pretty girls in the country after you," put in Nelson jokingly.

"But," suggested Van Dyck still ruminating, "I suppose I could will my money away to some missionary, or benevolent society; some college, church, female seminary or kindergarten?"

"Hang your benevolent societies!" replied Nelson in a provoked manner; "we can give away our money to the poor people,—those who are too honest to steal, too weak to work, and perhaps too proud to beg. Our missionary societies have got too much money already to squander for the enlightenment of the foreign heathen, as they call it, while the poor heathen at home lives in ignorance and dies in poverty. Oh, no, Van, don't give it to such institutions for they are amply surported already, by those people who would buy their christianity with their hoarded millions, as you and I would purchase stock in the Union Pacific Railroad. For my part, I should rather see old Kidd's gold lie where it is, than to have it dug up for any such uses as you have mentioned. I never could make myself believe that it is all right to give dishonest money for such purposes."

"Why, old man! You talk like a real philanthropist," said Van Dyck after his friend had finished. "But the cave? How could we ever get out? I would not care to spend my entire life there."

"Nor I," returned the other gloomily. But immediately Nelson added thoughtfully: "What troubles me most

the thought as to how we shall get into the cave. I have not much fear but I can get out all right, if I can get my hands on to old Kidd's gold. In money there is strength, and a power that will drive humanity through the solid rock, if necessary."

"But it cannot buy life?" inquired Van Dyck seriously.

"No."

"Nor purchase a new soul?" he asked again.

"No."

"But it can make us all rich?" he queried in a meaning way.

"Yes."

"Why should we not seek it then?"

"We should," Nelson promptly answered.

"How?"

"I don't know."

"What is your idea?"

"I have none."

When these two young men left the Manhattan Club House that night, both were seriously meditating.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next night came.

It was just nine o'clock when Billy Mattocks sauntered into the Manhattan Club House with his overcoat thrown carelessly over his left arm. He was nattily dressed, wore a silk hat which had just received a new polish at the hatters, and supported himself by a large gold-headed cane. He stopped and had a few moments conversation with some of the club members, whom he met in the billiard-room, and then hastened to meet his friends in the same little room where the trio had sat discussing the letter on the night before. The little card-table had been cleared of its usual contents,—a pack of playing cards and a box of poker chips,—and had now the appearance of an attorney's writing desk. Nelson and Van Dyck were already there, and *were prepared to do business.* When Mattocks entered the room, Van Dyck said: "On time for once."

"*I am always on time, like one of Delmonico's picked up tinnets,*" replied Mattocks jocosely.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Nelson. "You are just the man we want to lead us in our enterprise. Promptness you know is the key-note to success."

"Pray what enterprise do you mean?" asked Mattocks; I have heard of nothing of the kind.—Halloo! what does all this mean?"

Mattocks had hung up his hat and overcoat, and was standing before the little table on which was a bottle of ink, pens and a good stock of writing material. "What do you propose?"

"We are going to form a company," said Nelson.

"Quite the thing nowadays," replied Mattocks, becoming interested in the scheme.

"Yes;" said Nelson continuing. "Van and I have talked the matter over and have decided to form a company."

"What kind of a company?"

"Well suppose we call it a mining company. I will suggest the name of 'E and L' Mining Company, having a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars."

"Excellent!" said Mattocks. "Now, just what is there in the wind? In other words, what do you propose?" "Suspense you know is trying."

"Did you bring the letter along?" asked Nelson, with an eye to business.

Mattocks replied that he did, and laid it upon the table.

"You can guess our scheme?" said Nelson looking at Mattocks in a matter of fact way.

"No."

"We are going to search for Kidd's gold."

"How?" inquired Mattocks eagerly.

"By forming a joint stock company."

"That's a capital idea."

"Yes; the idea will call for capital," replied the other in jest.

"Will you join us?" asked Van Dyck.

"Certainly," replied the broker's son.

"*The die is cast,*" said Nelson, seizing his pen and paper, and beginning to write. "Van Dyck and myself" said he



"have planned this scheme all out, and have got the papers all drawn up necessary for forming ourselves into a body corporate with powers to carry on secret operations in seeking Captain Kidd's plunder beneath Iron Bound Island. I have also had a contract drawn up as a temporary arrangement, which now only requires our signatures to give it the *coup de grace* of a first-class legal instrument."

"We are going to bind ourselves in the sum of five thousand dollars each to defray the necessary expenses of the expedition, and ask our friends to subscribe for the rest of the stock."

"But I shall have to consider the financial part of this proposed expedition," said Mattocks gravely, thinking of the costs which an enterprise of this magnitude must incur.

"Do not fear. The gold is there. Have you heard the prediction that has just been made at Washington?" Nelson was enthusiastic, and spoke hastily.

"No!" promptly returned Mattocks.

"You are not in it, then," said Van Dyck, indulging in the popular slang of the day.

"What is it?" asked Mattocks.

"A heavy storm is predicted for the twenty-second of September."

"The line gale?"

"The same."

"What is the date of your letter?" asked Van Dyck.

"June, 17——." Promptly answered Mattocks.

"And what year was the gold buried?" again asked Van Dyck.

"16——," returned Mattocks.

"Sixty years before the letter was written?"

"Yes."

"And what year is this?" inquired Van Dyck shrewdly.

"18——."

"Now we have it. The letter of E. L. was dated June, 17——; just sixty years after Kidd hid his gold. It says *that the cave can be entered only once in fifty years, and must be in the night time when the line gale is raging, for*

these gales every half century blow with the same velocity. In other words, these storms are coincident every fifty years. According to the weather statistics these tempests have occurred regularly in their order, the first one of which we have any knowledge, being in the year 16——."

"The next one," said Nelson, "has just been predicted at Washington."

"Everything seems to be consistent with the letter so far." Said Mattocks.

"The letter is true. This man, E. L. whoever he is, did not write it for fun. I tell you it is the confession of a serious man," said the bold speculator with much vehemence.

"Shall we enter into the contract?" asked Van Dyck.

"To search for the gold?" returned Mattocks inquiringly.

"Yes."

"I am interested in the scheme," said Mattocks.

"Will you sign the papers?" asked Nelson.

"I will!" Mattocks answered firmly. "Give me the pen," he added; and in a strong, full hand Mattocks signed the articles of the expedition.

Nelson and Van Dyck followed suit, as soon as Mattocks had finished, and so the great enterprise was planned, and the expedition started, whose object was to discover the hidden booty of the bold pirate king, the late William Kidd.

The prediction of the coming storm,—which as the reader knows was fulfilled,—together with other facts not at all inconsistent with the dicta of the letter, had given these three enterprising young men implicit confidence in the statements of E. L., and strengthened their hope of achieving wonderful results in the future.

My name had not been used at the time the scheme was laid out; but after everything had been arranged, and my friends had begun to see the indiscreetness of admitting strangers into their confidence, and all the arrangements had been made, they proposed that I should be notified at Bar Harbor, whither I had gone a few weeks prior to the organization of the 'E and L' Mining Company.

*We were all five firm friends, and companions at the club, so that there could be no harm of course in letting me in.*

the secret; and besides, my check for five thousand down, and my written promise for the remaining five thousand, payable, if needed, would strengthen the company financially.

In what abrupt way I was introduced to the *coup de main* designed by my friends, the reader is acquainted sufficiently. My love for adventure; my ambition to win a fortune suddenly, and my implicit faith in the stories told me by Mattocks concerning the burying ground of Captain Kidd's plunder, had tempted me beyond expression to throw myself into uncertain speculation; and with the hope of obtaining gold, supposed by my adventurous friends to be lying idle in subterranean caverns, I felt perfectly willing to expose myself to the dangers of the expedition. Had I known then, as I do now, what perils and adventures I was destined to pass through; what suffering, what hardships I was to endure, never should I have left my pleasant quarters in the St. Sauveur hotel on that eventful night of the twenty-second of September:

"For all the sun sees, or the close earth wombs,  
Or the profound seas hide."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"O, what a sympathy of woe is this,  
As far from help as Limbo is from bliss."

WHEN I had failed to get an answer from Nelson, I lifted him bodily from the boat, and laid him gently on the rocks. I placed my hand over his heart and found it was still beating. Life was not altogether extinct, and I summoned my companions to his side. The blood was pouring freely from a deep cut on the head. Nelson had been stunned by the blow, which he had received against the front part of the boat, when she had so abruptly stopped. With the assistance of my companions, and my brandy flask I succeeded in getting a little life into my friend, so that after awhile he recovered sufficiently to talk with us.

*I was left behind to administer to the wants of Nelson, while my companions went on ahead to reconnoitre.*

I had said to Nelson after he had regained consciousness: "A narrow escape, old fellow."

"Where are we?" he asked in a half-dazed mind.

"On the island," I replied.

"The wind has gone down, has it not?" he again asked feebly, now sitting up for the first time.

"Yes."

"Where are the boys?"

"They have just gone ahead to explore this place," said I; "are you able to follow me?"

Nelson now having stood on his feet, had expressed his capability of doing immediate service, and followed me—whither I knew not. I had stopped the blood from flowing, and had bandaged his wound with my silk handkerchief, so that with the exception of a slight headache and a few symptoms of weakness and exhaustion, my friend was quite himself again, though I am compelled to say at this time, that he had had a narrow escape, knowing full well as I do concerning the fatality of the danger to which he had just been exposed. Fortunately the wound was not of a serious nature.

With the aid of our lantern, Nelson and myself were able to grope our way through the blinding darkness, and to feel out a path among the rocks. Nelson being well upon his feet, we hastened forward to overtake our friends. Their lights had now disappeared behind the rocks, so that we could not trace their course.

The wind did not blow, but the air at times seemed stived and impure. The rain had also ceased, but the sea still roared or murmured loudly, while now and then a heavy peal of thunder would cause the whole earth to tremble.

Nelson and I walked briskly forward for some little time in silence, stepping over rocks and climbing rough and uneven ledges, while occasionally we found our feet on sandy places or hard clayey bottom with smooth and regular surface, and as level as a marble floor. The atmosphere around us had a strong saline smell, the cause of which I attributed to the dampness of the night and our close proximity to the ocean. We had neither of us spoken, both feeling confide

nevertheless, that we should soon overtake the advance party.

Finally, Nelson said to me in a choked tone of voice: "Where do you suppose the boys are?"

"Not very far away," I replied.

"Suppose you call to them," said my friend.

Then I called out with a loud voice: "Halloo!"

There was a deep, hollow sound, and my own echo answered me in such an audible way as to seem like another voice calling back to me from the distance. At first, I thought it the voice of one of my companions, and I called out again. I received the same reply. "Wait for us!" I cried. But this time I perceived that it was only the echo of my own voice.

"Well," said I at last to Nelson, "this is a deuced peculiar place."

"Horrid!" returned my friend in a tone of disgust.

"I wish I was out of it," he continued; "the air here makes me sick."

I held my lantern near my watch and learned to my surprise, that it was now nearly five o'clock in the morning. I began to grow anxious and said to Nelson, "Did you ever see such darkness?"

"Never in all my life," he replied promptly. "I believe that the world is coming to an end."

"I think the Day of Judgment has come."

Nelson laughed heartily, and replied: "I hardly believe that the Day of Judgment will come in the night."

I saw the joke. The darkness was so dense that it was with great difficulty that we got along, even with the assistance of our lantern. I was growing uneasy, lest I might not again see the daylight, while my friend had now begun to complain of exhaustion. I ordered a halt, and the command was most willingly executed.

"It is useless," said I languidly, "for us to undertake to find Mattocks and his party before daylight appears in the sky. They are probably not far away, but it is too dark to find them among these rocks and cliffs."

"It must soon be daylight;" replied Nelson hopefully.

And so we sat down and waited for the daylight that never came. Both of us were faint and hungry, so that we found rest in discussing our situation, and gained strength and hope from my brandy flask. Our lunch baskets were in our boat, and our full supply of provisions, which had been packed into the other boats, we now believed was in the bottom of the sea.

"Do you think it will ever grow light again?" asked Nelson faintly.

"I presume it must sometime," I answered cleverly.

"There are just two things about it," said the speculator; "we must either find our boat, or starve here. Our oil is fast burning out, and we shall be left in everlasting darkness."

Nelson suggested that we return to our boat, and I concurred most heartily in the proposition. Our oil was fast giving out, and when that should be gone, and our light extinguished, we should be left in total darkness, without guide, food, or compass. The situation was startling! Once, when Nelson's back was turned, I looked at my watch again, and found, to my great surprise, that it wanted only a few minutes of eight. For the first time, the truth began to dawn upon my mind,—*we were in a cave!*

Only one thing must be done. We must find our boat.

"Have you a compass, Henry?" I asked of Nelson.

"None," responded my friend in despair.

"Do you know the way back to the boat?"

"No."

"How did we come?"

"By a direct course."

"We must go back," I said; "if you know the way, lead on, and I will follow you."

Nelson now took the lantern, and started on ahead. I followed a short distance behind him. Once I lagged and did not keep up with him, but followed the light of his lantern, which was now burning dimly. Pretty soon, I heard him call out to me, and immediately I answered him.

"We can go no further," said he.

"Why?" I asked with surprise.

"There is nothing but solid rock in front of us, and it is very steep, so that we cannot climb over it."

"It is the side of the island," said I. "We must go round it."

We felt our way along the sides of the cliffs, which rose perpendicularly above us,—how far, we could not tell—and moved on to find our boat. The water dripped at times upon our heads, and I had once said to Nelson: "It is raining again."

"Yes we are going to get another shower," he replied.

The hour was getting late, and I now realized that it must be daylight; and as we did not see it, I had made up my mind that we were not on the beach, but in some dismal cavern. I did not tell Nelson so, but only thought it. Perhaps we were at that very moment in the cave which we were seeking. But those high cliffs? I was forced to change my mind, and believe once more that I was standing under the granite walls of Iron Bound Island. And then the darkness; I could not account for it.

I had given up all hope of finding our boats; and so strange and mysterious did everything seem around me, that I became bewildered, and did not know which way to turn. I was truly horrified by the darkness, and by the strange images that were on all sides visible in the pale light of our lantern. My heart grew sick when I again looked at my watch, and saw that it was now ten o'clock. It was day.

We were cut off at every point from supplies, and hemmed in by rocks and blinding darkness. We had nothing to eat and no oil with which to replenish our light when it should go out. I had a few drops of brandy left in my flask, and I divided it with my friend, who was more overcome by fatigue than myself, on account of the injury he had received on this morning.

*Nelson was in good spirits, however; and in order to keep his courage up, I had purposely withheld from him the true time.*

I realized, too well, that we were in a most perilous situation, and unless rescued from this dismal place by some good piece of unexpected fortune, we should both perish here together. And our companions; they, too, must necessarily meet with a like fate.

We pushed on some little distance further, still clinging to the cold, damp sides of the cliffs, when all of a sudden we came to an abrupt standstill.

"It's no use; we can't go ahead any further," said Nelson hopelessly. "There is rock on all sides of us."

"Hard stuck," said I cheerfully; "rather a dubious place, old boy."

I took the lantern and held it aloft in order to ascertain, if possible, into what manner of place we had drifted, and my eyes beheld a most wonderful sight.

Above my head there were fret-work ceilings of stalactites quaintly fashioned, which gave the canopy the appearance of an etching, whose every outline was one of transparency; and the architecture here would have excelled the vivid imagination of even the most poetical mind. It was, indeed, a paragon of workmanship of that incompatible artisan, Nature, whose architecture men may admire, but in their own creations the excellence of whose production they can never attain.

There were many cellular formations within the rock that completely barricaded us, all of which were embossed and frescoed with limestone concretions; while the interior of the whole place, was indeed, exquisitely finished with this frosty masonry, and the floor was decorated artistically in places with stalagmites, constructed in a variety of shapes, some of them being formed like curiously wrought parian vases. The stalactite hangings here, though of much smaller size than in caves which I have visited in certain islands in the Pacific, yet composed a grandeur such as I had never seen before.

"Look here, Nelson!" I cried; and my friend looked upon the sight in astonishment.

I swung the lantern aloft once more. "Now look for the last time," said I, "for our light is going out."



We both cast our eyes toward this wonderful handiwork of subterranean formation, and reluctantly withdrew from the cave into which we had accidentally walked.

"This is a novel place," said I, when we were both out again.

"Novel! A terrible place," replied Nelson excitedly. "We have been in a cave."

"Yes; and by the darkness that prevails, I should judge that we are still in one."

"A pokish hole," Nelson murmured to himself.

"Do you have any idea where our boat is?" I again asked.

"Not in the least. I am all turned round," my friend replied with a deep sigh of despondency.

"We must find it," said I, again turning up the low, flickering flame which had become well-nigh extinguished.

Just then my attention was peremptorily called to a low gurgling sound among the rocks directly at my left. On investigation I found a small stream of cool water bubbling up from beneath two ledges. Nelson and I stooped down, and drank deeply of the fresh water, for we were both thirsty and the water refreshed us. The stream wended its way over the loose pebbles that lay along its course for some distance before becoming submerged again beneath the rocks to erode its subterranean channel through the soft limestone; and by some irresistible impulse or instinct, I followed the course of the stream. In spite of the darkness, and the strange sights we had seen, I could see that Nelson did not yet fully realize the fact that we were under the island instead of being, as he thought, on the shore. I might have labored under the same wrongful impression myself had I not been informed differently by my time-piece.

Nelson was growing tired and weak, and was suffering a sharp pain in the head. Our oil was on the verge of giving out, and then our light would surely go out, so that we could not follow the thread of the stream among the rocks. I *felt sure that it was* flowing toward the ocean, and if there *was any opening from this* place, perhaps by following the *stream we might be able to find it.*

Nelson had now stopped and was leaning languidly against the side of a bowlder. I told him to come along; but he did not obey me. I went back to where he was standing, and I found him fast asleep with his head against a rock. I laid my hand heavily upon his shoulder and shook him. He awoke.

"Come!" said I; "we must hasten, for our light is going out."

"I must sleep," answered my friend: again leaning against the rock.

I knew that what he had spoken was too true, yet I questioned the advisability of his sleeping upon the damp rocks. Rest, however, of some kind was inevitable; so pulling off my overcoat, I made him a bed upon the ledges, and he threw himself quickly upon it. A moment afterwards, I left him sleeping.

My object now, was to find some wood with which to kindle a fire, for we were both wet and chilly; and besides a roaring wood fire would provide us light.

My light—which was my only hope—was about to go out; and thus far my attempt to find wood had altogether failed. As I climbed over a huge bowlder, I perceived that in another moment my light would be out forever. The sensation which then came over me—the fear that possessed my heart—can better be imagined than described. Starvation, darkness eternal—death! stared me grimly in the face. I was about to step from the rock, upon which I had been standing, onto the sand below, when perchance I caught a glimpse of some dark object a few feet ahead of me. I swung my lantern into the air and the light flashed into the darkness for the last time. It was at that moment that I got a plain view of the object before me. I was not mistaken. Still resting on the rocks where we had left her, I saw our boat.

## CHAPTER V.

“And art thou living, Stephano?  
O Stephano, two Neopolitans ‘scaped.”

My light had gone completely out, so that I could not see my hand before me. The boat, I knew, could be only a few feet away, but in the impenetrable darkness,—who could have told which way to turn?

After a great deal of trouble, both physically and mentally, in making headway among the rocks, by chance, I stumbled almost headlong into our boat. Where I had been, or what course I had taken in getting there, were both equally unknown to me. Some good fortune had rightly guided me back to the very spot, whence I had that morning departed, and I was safe.

My first thought of course was for the oil, for I knew that several bottles of it had been drawn from the tanks and put into our boat. It had been left somewhere in the stern, so I began to feel about among our dunnage, and succeeded after a time in finding two bottles of oil, containing in both about two quarts. The rest of it was gone, probably carried away by Mattocks and his companions.

There was only one lunch basket in the boat, but this was well filled with food. The advance party had taken the rest. I was glad to learn these facts, because I knew that with plenty of oil and food, my companions could survive for a long time.

After I had searched the boat thoroughly, I lighted my lantern again and succeeded in getting together many necessary articles, among them certain utensils for cooking, and a large quantity of food already cooked. I also found in the boat two heavy sleeping blankets, which I at first intended to take to my friend, but Nelson being only a short distance away I finally concluded to call him. I knew that he was *soundly sleeping*, nevertheless I would undertake to awaken him, so I yelled out to him loudly. A voice answered me. “Come, Nelson,” I said; “I have found our boat.”

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the voice from out of the darkness.

I sat down on one of the thwarts of the boat to await the arrival of my friend.

"Can you find the way?" I asked.

"Swing your light, pal, so I can see you. I reckon it's kinder dark in this vicinity," came the order in a deep, gruff voice, that I did not recognize. I stood up and swung the lantern as bidden.

"Is that you Nelson?" I asked; now hearing approaching footsteps.

"I reckon not, pal," replied the strange voice.

"Who are you?"

"It's me pal; I am coming."

Before I could again speak, I was confronted by a strange man, but by his clothing I recognized him as being one of the sailors of our expedition.

"Where is Mattocks and the rest of our crew?" I asked of the stranger.

"Don't know," he answered laconically.

The man sat down on the side of the boat, and proceeded to light his pipe.

"Don't know?" I asked again in surprise.

"I ain't seen nothin' on him," replied the man nonchalantly, beginning to puff vigorously at his pipe.

"Who are you, anyhow?" I asked of the man, who was acting so strangely and coolly, notwithstanding our situation.

"Blest if I know, stranger. My name used to be Jim White when I signed articles on shipboard. That's what the boys called me up in New York, but it is liable to be something else here in these aire parts. Mighty strange place this, I reckon, pal."

I replied that I concurred with his opinion of the place.

"How did you get here?" I asked.

The man took several puffs at his pipe, which he seemed very much to enjoy, and eyeing me curiously he said: "*Afore I answer your question stranger, let me ask you one, —how did you get here?*"

I replied that I was driven here by the storm of last night. "My case zackly, pal. Curious ain't it? 'Twas a mighty big sea that beached us. Ther boys were awful frightened, I reckon."

"What boys?" I asked eagerly.

"Our crew. A brave set of men, I reckon, but that sea was too much for 'em."

"What boat did you come in?"

"The Dolphin, sure. A finer boat never struggled with the sea."

"You came in one of the provision boats, then?" I interrogated.

"That's it, pal. I reckon you have guessed the truth."

"Were both boats driven into this place?"

"Ain't seen only one besides this one, here."

"Where is the Dolphin?"

"Over yonder on the rocks. Reckon she'll lay thar a day or two by the looks of things."

"Do you know where we are?"

"Reckon I don't, stranger."

"Well," I replied, "I believe we are in the cave where Captain Kidd buried his gold."

"Maybe 'tis, and maybe 'taint, you know best stranger," replied the man indifferently; but soon I discovered that the stranger was not exactly pleased with the situation.

"Got any grog 'bout yer, stranger?" he asked, sailor fashion.

I gave him my flask which I had replenished with brandy on arriving at the boat, and the man seized it with alacrity.

"Ah, stranger," said he, after he had drank over half the contents of my flask; "'Tis the poison arter all that drives away dull care, and makes the bold sailor lad crave for the tempests of the ocean. It quiets the winds, stills the waves and makes the dangers of the sea less perilous."

Then the thirsty man tipped the flask, and drank to the bottom.

"*But it is the curse of mankind, Jim,*" I replied, *addressing the man familiarly.*

He passed me the empty flask, and said in his usual cool manner: "Maybe 'tis, stranger, and maybe 'taint."

Being now well warmed up with my brandy, the man who had given me his name as Jim White, one of the crew of the Dolphin, went on to relate his story. He had had the same experience as myself. His boat had been caught by a gigantic wave and hurled into this unknown place. The sailors, with their cockswain, had left their boat to explore the place and had left him in the boat to guard the stores. He had grown tired of the silence around him, and when his companions did not return he had strolled away from his boat and lost his way. The sailors, he said, had taken but two lanterns with them, and no provisions, and he feared they would perish unless rescued. His boat was only a short distance away, he believed, which was loaded with supplies for the expedition, and with useful tackle of all kinds.

We first searched about among the rocks for wood, which we found, and built up a roaring fire.

While Jim White was preparing some hot coffee, I went back to the place where I had left Nelson, and found him still sleeping. I awoke him with difficulty, and conducted him to our boat.

Hot coffee, toasted bread, a big blazing fire, and the presence of another companion, revived our spirits, which had fallen far below zero during the night and morning, and made new men of us. We were all three of us greatly fatigued and needed rest.

After we had eaten most ravenously of the lunch which Jim White had carefully prepared for us, we discussed the situation among ourselves, and decided to get some sleep first, and then after refreshing our wearied bodies adequately, to start out to rescue our companions, who were lost and wandering somewhere among the rocks.

The unexpected appearance of White had strengthened my belief that every member of the expedition, except those who had been knocked overboard, were alive and were somewhere in this great cave. That we had all been cast in here by the same mysterious power was fully confirmed by the statements made by Jim White.

I was now fully prepared to believe implicitly in the contents of the letter which was behind all our trouble, and that somewhere hereabouts was buried the plunder of Captain Kidd.

But where? It could be buried in a thousand and one different places, and no man could ascertain its resting place.

"There are many roads to fortune," I thought; "all of them equally interminable and uncertain." If we could only once get our expedition together we might perhaps be able to hit upon some definite plan by which to explore the cave, and find the path which leads to the hidden treasure.

But the company was divided, and each had now become a search party for the rescue of their companions, so that all were now wandering promiscuously about through perils of greater or lesser magnitude, like so many sheep that had lost their master, and knew not which way to turn.

Nelson, White and myself made up one party. We were now perfectly satisfied that we had been swept into a cave under the island, and must try to make the best of our situation.

As our fire blazed up at times we could see by the light which shone, the roof of the cavern. There was quite a good supply of drift-wood among the rocks, but mostly wet and soggy, so that it became necessary to saturate it well with kerosene oil before lighting it. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and when I revealed this fact to Jim White he grew timid.

We had now found the Dolphin only a short distance away, and had been able with the use of our torches to establish a line of communication between the two boats, so that by brisk work we succeeded by six o'clock in getting all of our supplies stored together in one common camp near our fire.

With what canvas there was in the two boats we pitched a small tent over our boat, and prepared comfortable quarters for the night. It was now our plan to eat our supper, refresh our bodies by sleep and then try to rescue our friends. At seven o'clock we all retired for the night, and in a few

moments I heard my companions soundly sleeping. After awhile I fell asleep myself, but was soon awakened by someone calling in a distressed tone of voice outside. I half arose from my stony pillow, and listened attentively. It was the voice of one in trouble. I did not awake my comrades, but got up and peered out across our camp fire into the darkness. I was about to answer the call, when at that moment, a man pale and haggard emerged from the darkness, and fell exhausted before the fire. I seized our lantern, which had been left burning, and hastened from the tent. I raised the man up and looked into his face.

"For God sake!" I cried in a startled voice; and staggered backward into the tent.

The man was Tommy Scott our cockswain, who had been knocked overboard on the previous morning, and whom I had supposed at that moment was lying in the bottom of the sea a dead man!

## CHAPTER VI.

"O brother, speak with possibilities,  
And do not break into these deep extremes."

MORNING at last came, after a tragic night; but we saw not its dawn. It was ten o'clock by my watch when I turned out, and called my companions. All had slept soundly, and awoke much refreshed and recruited, in minds as well as bodies. Our party now included four persons. The almost phenomenal appearance of Scott, the cockswain, after we had all given him up for lost and dead, had added strength to our camp, and brought hope to our hearts, for we now felt quite certain that every member of our expedition was living, and wandering about in the cave.

A fire was soon kindled, a lunch prepared, and arrangements made for the start. It was our purpose to find our friends.

By the aid of a small pocket compass, which we found in one of the boats, we were able to shape some definite course, though none of us knew whither we were going; and by



keeping our bearings adequately correct, we hoped to be able to return to our boats, if necessary.

"The cave cannot be a very long one;" said Nelson who had been meditating. "Iron Bound Island you know could be easily traversed and retraversed in less than a day. It is not a very large island."

"Very true;" I replied; "but the cave may extend a great distance under the sea. Who knows? Perhaps we have been swept into a subterranean cavern greater than Mammoth even."

Nelson was evidently dissatisfied with our situation.

"Do you know what the letter says about the cave?" he asked.

"Yes."

"In particular," persisted the speculator," it states that the gold is not buried in the main cave; but it mentions a certain passage-way, leading from the cave to the spot where the gold lies buried. This, I judge, to be the main cave alluded to by E. L. in his letter."

"Possibly you may be correct about that," I replied; "yet there is another possibility of this place mentioned by E. L. being a cave itself,—perhaps a part of this one. No man can tell what an innumerable amount of passages and caves may exist here under the sea. Have you not heard strange stories told by the natives of Mt. Desert concerning the immeasurable depth of the water in certain parts of Frenchman's Bay? I have often heard it said, that people have frequently been drowned in the harbor, and no traces of their bodies could ever afterwards be found. Who knows but that they, too, have been washed into some such place as this, and perished here by exposure and extreme hunger? This is indeed a wonderful mystery."

Nelson shuddered.

"But then," said he; "why should we fear? The thought might seem alarming to him who had been cast here by accident; but we are here for gold, and we must find it. You frightened me so badly, that I quite forgot the object of our coming. Foolish fancy! Do not talk superstition,

possibilities or groundless rumors to me, my friend, for: 'All is well that ends well,' don't you know?"

"Nonsense!" said I, aggravated by my friend's remarks; "we must find our friends,—gold afterwards."

Nelson laughed sardonically.

"Gold is the prime factor in this expedition," he replied earnestly.

"Human life," said I, "is more precious than all your gold, aye, very fine gold, or precious stones. Our friends are probably in danger, and it devolves upon us to rescue them. I would not sacrifice the life of the meanest man in our expedition for all the gold that was ever taken on board of Captain Kidd's ship."

Nelson disliked my brief, though scathing retort, but said nothing.

I could see by his conduct and his words that my friend was not quite himself. It seemed to me that his mind for the love of gold, was fast becoming petrified against the sympathy which ordinarily comes to the heart when humanity is in danger. His mind appeared to be inexplicably bound up in and fastened most tenaciously to the prime object of the expedition; and he entertained only side thoughts for the safety of his companions.

His love for gold, and total disregard for the relief of men whose lives were in peril, made his condition startling, and fretted me exceedingly. To find the hidden treasures of Captain Kidd was the one thought which kept his mind constantly occupied; and it predominated over all others, even over those which might have been favorable to suffering humanity. Gold was his Utopia.

We were now moving at a rapid rate through the dark bosom of the cave. Our camp was in the rear by nearly an hour, and we had not yet come to the end of the cave. The darkness was indescribable. Jim White, the sailor, began to lose heart, and begged of us to return. Nelson was in the lead, and pushed on. Scott and myself said nothing. *The thought of being in a huge cavern, from which there seemed to be no escape, overcame the mind of the bold sailor man*

White was an easy victim to superstition, and like many men of his kind it formed the invincible barrier which kept him constantly behind in the race for a higher intelligence of worldly things. In his opinion we had all been hurled into Hades, and were now only marching forward to certain death and destruction. The thought terrified him in the darkness. If he could only see the light of the bright world above him once more! But no; he was doomed to dwell forever in the dark abodes of the wicked. The thought haunted him. It grew on him as we proceeded. It was really sad, indeed, for one of greater wisdom and courage than White to contemplate what the end of this once "bold man of the sea" might be, who was now laboring under such a dreadful delusion. In the world above, he had ever borne in his bosom a heart of iron, and nerves of steel. He had braved the fiercest storms that ever raged, and rode on seas of mountains without having experienced that sensation which men call fear. Among the crews of the ships in which he had sailed he had gained by heroic action the reputation of being the boldest of the brave.

In this nether world to which he had come, he was a different man. In the darkness and uncertainty that now enveloped him, his heart grew timid; and he quailed before the thought of death which he now felt certain awaited him ahead. Physically, Jim White the rollicking, fearless sailor, was a brave man. Morally he was a coward, for he feared the end.

He did not care to go on, yet he was equally afraid to remain behind, so he unwillingly followed us, and became a burden to our party. White was but a man in disguise. He had become a child once more; or in other words the lion had become metamorphosed to the lamb. The vein of careless indifference, and coolness of manner which the observant reader has hitherto noticed running through the character of this man had at last been traced to its end, even *amid the blinding darkness* of a subterranean cavern.

*Jim White was now mute and silent on account of fear. The world might not believe the transformation which had so suddenly taken place in White, possible; but it*

truth there are many things unknown to mortal man. We who do know, can well believe.

Tommy Scott, our cockswain, was a brave boy, and possessed a most sympathetic nature. To me he seemed more like one lately arisen from the dead. Certain strange and unnatural events, through which he had passed during the last forty-eight hours, had made a courageous man of him, for he now believed himself impervious, as it were, to all dangers whether in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth.

Several times within the day Scott had reprimanded White for his cowardice which had much the same effect on the sailor's mind, as one might imagine that certain stimulants would have on the nerves of some sick patient. The bitter reproof that he received from his companions acted like a tonic upon his drooping spirits, and dispelled in part the clouds of timidity that clouded his mind; for there is no man so cowardly who cannot be made temporarily brave again by being accused of his weakness.

About noon we were obliged to halt. We had arrived at the extreme end of the cave. Directly in front of us were what appeared to be huge cliffs; but these columns of granite stood *vis-a-vis* like immense pilasters supporting a heavy pediment with its cornice and frieze, resembling the facade of some old Grecian edifice. Beneath were large and uneven ledges, rising one above the other like granite steps ascending to the vestibule, which natural causes had so uniquely wrought in the solid rock a few feet above the level of the cave. All were much fatigued by the journey of the morning, and here our party rested.

Nelson was the first to speak after we had halted at this strange place. He was sitting on one of the ledges near the entrance of the arcade with his back resting against one of the granite plinths behind him. Said he, in a suggestive mood: "If it were not for the knowledge which I already possess concerning this place, I could well imagine myself reclining beneath the walls of some Grecian palace. *Who knows but what this is the entrance of the passage-way that leads to the hidden treasures of the pirate king?*"

"A strange place," said I in answer to my friend's conjecture; "but our friends, Mattocks and Van Dyck, where can they be at this time?"

Nelson replied in his usual matter of fact way. Said he: "I would not be much surprised to learn that they have struck the right passage, and are now feasting themselves on the long buried plunder of Captain Kidd, while we are losing valuable time here beneath these granite domes. Come! let us away."

Perhaps my friend was right in his last speech, yet I could not make myself believe that Van Dyck and Mattocks would desert their friends for the sake of the possession of Captain Kidd's gold. The thought was not flattering to say the least. I ventured the opinion that our companions had entered some interminable passage-way communicating with the main cave, and had now become so intricately wound up in the mysteries of the place, that they were probably unable to find their way back to the cave.

There was a passage-way in front of us, leading I knew not where. I took one of the torches and reconnoitred, while my companions were resting their weary bodies. I discovered along the side of the cavern many other chambers, or passages with facades similar in appearance to the first, though of much smaller dimensions; and these tunnels I noticed on investigation led in different directions. Many of these entrances stood quite near together which gave that part of the cave an appearance of a colonnade. There seemed to be innumerable passages leading from the cave.

I went back and reported this fact to my companions, and it confused them exceedingly, especially Nelson. I did not dare to conjecture as to the length of these passages, nor as to what place each might lead. I was myself puzzled. I conferred with the enthusiastic speculator about them. Said I: "Here are a great many passages, like the one mentioned by E. L. in his letter, leading from this place. Only one *can possibly lead to the gold*, if there is any such thing in *existence here*. Now which path is the right one? We *cannot follow them all at once*."

My friend at first could not reply. He was meditating; and for a long time he sat with his head resting on his hand as if in profound study. When he did not answer me I said again: "There are many paths here, but only one can lead to the fortune."

Nelson was aroused, and gazing at me he spoke earnestly: "we must take the first one. If we do not find the place, we can return, and try the next and so on until we have succeeded."

"But," I answered thoughtfully, "there are an innumerable number of these passages, and to trace them all would involve the work of a life-time. Who knows?" Again the speculator was puzzled.

"Tis a lottery," he finally said; "we must try to find the gold, and if the fates are against us we lose. Fair fortune must certainly favor the brave. This passage-way cannot be so very long. I propose that we try it."

I walked into the corridor a short distance. All was darkness inside. The floor was composed of slate rock, smooth and level like a marble surface. The entrance to this passage, like many of the others, was that of a square, but there were several of them that were oval shape, having the appearance of enormous ovens naturally formed in the rock, like the natural ovens which are found at Mt. Desert.

We lighted our torches, and entered the passage. Jim White trembled violently with fear, and it was with difficulty that any of us were encouraged by the prospect ahead. Nelson, however, was confident.

White could hardly keep right side up, on account of the lubricous surface of the rocks under his feet. He did not complain, but followed us. I could see that his heart was not in his work. He cared nothing for the success of the expedition, nothing for gold, and had but little thought for the safety of his lost companions. He was an excellent sample of selfish mankind; a good representative of thoughtless humanity. His sole consideration seemed to be for the rescue of Jim White from Hades. Jim had a conscience, however, and its violent gnawings were a source of trouble to him in the under-ground world in which he was now dwelling.

"A man may be wrecked as is a ship," says Victor Hugo. "Conscience is an anchor. Terrible it is, but true, that like the anchor, conscience may be carried away."

Not so, however, with the uncouth Jim White. In all the storms and tempests, which he had braved during his life, he had never been so unfortunate as to have his anchor——conscience——carried away. It was still with him, and he carried it about in the darkness of the nether world, like one who groans under a heavy burden.

Our compass indicated that we were following a north-westerly course. Already we had traveled for nearly an hour, and there were no indications yet visible anywhere of the passage terminating. I imagined it to be an endless road. This tunnel, through which we were passing was about ten feet wide and perhaps as many feet high. The air was very close and impure, so that at times respiration was difficult.

Hitherto the bottom part of the tunnel had been perfectly level, but now we began to descend, and our path became rough and pebbly, and wound dizzily in and out among huge rocks and misshapen ledges. Our compass became very unsteady, being due no doubt to the strong magnetic properties of the atmosphere within the passage, and in one moment we would find ourselves travelling south, and the next moment due north. Finally the little needle played havoc with itself, and whirled around and about, backward and forward, with restless motion, so that we were confused, and knew not which way we were travelling. Then we came to a straight path again, leading us through a deep fine sand, so that we sank down into it to our knees, making locomotion a thing almost impossible. From this place we unexpectedly emerged from the darkness into a broad opening, which was circular in form, and contained huge ledges, broken and uneven, rising up from the center of the cavity one after another, giving the place the appearance of a Roman amphitheatre. A dim, pale light, something like the moonlight, made everything inside perfectly visible, so that we were able to dispense with our torches. The air here was pure,

and a cool breeze continually swept through the place coming from the apertures and crevices among the rocks. Over our heads was a canopy studded with myriads of sparkling crystals, which twinkled and shone like diamonds, giving it the appearance of an asterism in a golden sky. These crystalline formations were of many beautiful colors, like the rainbow, and emitted a radiancy that lighted up the whole cavern.

Our sudden *entree* into the light created great joy among the entire party. My companions were delighted. Nelson was certain that this was the place alluded to by E. L. in the letter. When he beheld the light, and looked around him, he cried: "Eureka!" He was quite jubilant, and left me without consultation. I saw him descend the rocks, and soon he disappeared from our sight. Jim White believed that we had at last emerged from the cave into daylight, and uttered a cry of delight, and exclaimed: "Thank God, for our deliverance!"

Alas, for poor White! there were yet untold adventures in store for him before emerging from the darkness into which he had been cast. It was wonderful to notice how soon he became simple Jim White again after coming into the light. His courage was restored to him for the while, and for the first time for several hours he pulled his pipe out and began to smoke vigorously. Jim was at last saved, —in his own mind.

I saw Scott, our noble cockswain, looking upon the sight in strange bedazzlement. There was a grave mystery about the place which neither of us could understand. Below us, at some distance, I saw Nelson exploring among the rocks. He was looking for gold.

Once Scott said to me: "This is really a strange place, sir. I should be pleased to hear you express an opinion concerning it."

"Those crystals," I replied, "have dazed my mind. I am, indeed, mystified. I must consider."

"Could you not conjecture?" he persisted.

"Possibly I might," said I contemplatively.



"What do you think?" he asked.

"I judge this cave to be a part of the passage-way, through which we have been passing, though rather more elliptical and expanded than any part we have yet seen. It is also deeper."

Perhaps my explanation of the situation did not seem over plausible, yet it was the very best that I could then offer.

"What is your opinion, White?" I asked of the sailor, who was now enjoying his pipe only a short distance away.

"Maybe 'tis, and maybe 'taint. I reckon you know best, pal."

His voice sounded more familiar to me. It was so natural, —so much like Jim White of old.

Scott and I discussed the situation between ourselves for some little time, until finally our attention was suddenly called to White. He had put up his pipe, and was now in the deep slough of despond. He had at last come to his senses, and had discovered the nature of the place which surrounded him. He seemed more terrified than ever. The light which he saw without the sun and a blue sky, frightened him even more than the darkness had done. He could not account for the strange phenomenon. That we had at last arrived in Hades he was now more than certain. He knew it, and told us so candidly. White was naturally a very garrulous man, but at present "mum" was the word with him. He followed us and said but little. Below us we saw Nelson at work among the rocks.

"What can he be doing?" asked Scott.

"Digging for Captain Kidd's gold, I guess."

"I am afraid he will not find it here," replied the cockswain.

"He has gone crazy on the subject, —a monomaniac." said I.

"Yes; a money maniac," returned Scott facetiously.

*I consulted my watch, and saw that it was now just three o'clock in the afternoon. We descended the rocks, and soon came to the place where Nelson was at work. Apparently*

he did not take any notice of us. He turned and looked up at us once and then renewed his hunt for gold with great assiduity.

I spoke to him. He looked up quickly, for my voice seemed to startle him.

"Behold!" said he pointing me to an opening in the rocks a short distance away from where he was standing.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Do you not see?"

My friend was now pointing us to what appeared to be human foot-prints. They were numerous, and occupied considerable space in the vicinity where we were all standing.

"The gold is buried here," said the speculator almost savagely.

"Why do you think so?"

"Do you not see the foot-marks of Captain Kidd's sailors? No other body of men would dare come to a place like this."

"Pooh! men do not enter such places in their bare feet. I see no evidence of shoe leather here." I answered.

"Sailors do not wear shoes in the summer season," said my friend; "they often go barefooted on ship-board."

"What say you to that, Jim?" I asked of the sailor who stood timidly by. "Is Mr. Nelson's statement true or not?"

Jim was as laconic as usual, and was too brief in his replies for one to draw much information from him.

"Maybe 'tis, and maybe 'taint," he answered in his usual way. "I reckon sailors do not allers wear their shoes."

"Is that the usual practice?" I snapped out at him impatiently.

"Maybe 'tis, and maybe 'taint, pal. I reckon you know as much 'bout that as I do," he again replied.

"Waal paal, I rickon I dooo," I returned mockingly. I was perplexed, for his answers aggravated me. I tried to bring White's mind into reasoning with our own, but had failed to get anything of much value out of him. At any rate the sailor had concurred with Nelson's opinion, *that sailors often go barefooted in the summer, when on ship-board, especially foreign sailors.* There were many of these

tracks among the rocks, that resembled human foot-prints. Some of them looked strange. Besides these foot-prints, I found on investigation, those tracks which resembled the human hand. I called Nelson's attention to this remarkable circumstance, and he was ready with an explanation. Said he: "These designing men crawled into this place upon all fours, for fear of being discovered, not knowing exactly to what place they had come."

"But," said I, "these tracks are imprinted in the solid rock."

"The clay has since become petrified. These tracks have been here for nearly two centuries," replied Nelson knowingly.

"Yes; two thousand years, dear boy!" I returned.

It was my belief then, as it is now, that these tracks to which my attention had been called by Nelson, and which had helped delude his excitable mind, in his great anxiety to find the hidden treasures for which the world has long sought, were the surviving evidence of animal life that once existed in other ages, since they resembled most strongly the tracks of certain species of quadruped reptiles, like the dinosaurs of the Triassic, or the Jurassic time. Some of them had the shape of the human hand, with the thumb and finger perfectly formed, while the others resembled in all respects the human foot.

Of course we conjectured concerning them, and what is most natural, we all entertained different opinions. Scott, however, said nothing at all about these tracks. Everything here puzzled him completely. Jim White, thought these strange looking tracks were those of the devils that inhabited that region, and he shrank away from them in horror. His opinion, I must confess, was as plausible as any under the circumstances. Not even the most skilled cosmographer could have expressed a satisfactory opinion, without the closest application to his science.

"*These tracks,*" said I to Nelson, "*are probably a thousand years older than Captain Kidd.*"

*He did not take my statement for truth. It was his opinion that these were the tracks of Captain Kidd's sailors, who*

had stolen into this place during the night time, and hidden their gold; and that, in this cavern whose light was almost brilliant by the crystal stars above, we should be able to find untold wealth.

"Somewhere hereabouts," said he, "is the buried plunder of the old pirate."

Scott and I urged him to give up his hunt for gold for the present, and explore the cave with us. He wouldn't listen to us, but began to dig and pry up the loose rocks with a small pick which he had brought along with him.

After he had refused to come with us for the second time, we walked away and left him digging among the rocks.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Thou sufferedst men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, and thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

It was not long before Nelson became fatigued by his work, and gave up his fruitless search for the gold, which he had vainly thought was buried there beneath the strange tracks at the bottom of Crystal Cave. It was five o'clock in the afternoon when he appeared to us up the cliff. We had climbed to the top of the rocks ascending to the roof of the cave, so that we could almost touch with our hands the beautiful canopy of sparkling crystals over our heads.

Our lunch baskets being well-filled, we concluded to prepare supper, and camp down here for the night. Scott and I began to look about the cave for wood with which to kindle a fire, but not even so much as a chip could we find. The place seemed destitute of wood. We searched the cave high and low for fuel, and were returning to our companions empty handed, when I heard Scott who was a short distance ahead of me, exclaim: "Another passage!" We went in and examined the place. Sure enough, there was a dark passage-way leading from the cavern, the walls of which were somewhat higher than our heads near the entrance, but *further on inside*, the roof became gradually higher and *inclined*. The width of the pass was but a few feet. The

floor was composed of smooth, flat rocks, and covered in places with finely ground shells. The darkness here was not so dense, as in the other passage-ways, and within, the chamber was not damp. The temperature of the air was extremely warm, but not hot; and through the place there seemed to be a draught of dry, sultry air, though not suffocating. Scott and I went into the passage a short distance, and then returned to our companions, both of whom we found soundly sleeping.

We did not awaken them, but ate our lunch, and turned in for the night to dream of a fairer and brighter country beyond Crystal Cave. I did not awake until late the next day. When I opened my eyes and looked about, I saw Nelson and Scott eating their breakfast on the rocks a short distance away. Jim White was still sleeping. When Nelson saw me approach the sleeper, he said, "Wake him up!"

"Oh, no;" I replied, "let the poor fellow sleep. Perhaps his rest will do him good. He will awake soon much refreshed, with his appetite sharpened for adventure, as well as for his breakfast."

After I had eaten a small lunch, consisting chiefly of dry bread and cold beef, I said to Nelson: "This is a barren country. I am sure we could not live long here. Our food will soon be giving out, and then we shall be unable to replenish our baskets."

"Why can we not live?" he asked.

"Well," said I, "because in the first place, there is no wood here."

"But can we not burn coal?"

"Coal! where?" I asked in surprise.

"There is plenty of it here," returned the speculator. "If there was any possible way to get it from this place, I should most certainly suggest some plan for mining it."

"And how do you know this?" I asked.

"While digging among the rocks last night I discovered a *large quantity of it*. I can hardly explain the reason for its *existence here*. I should as quickly look for coal at the *North Pole*."

"As to look for gold here," said I jokingly.

"No! as to look for coal here," said the speculator indignantly.

"The fact is easily enough explained," said I.

"How?"

"In the same way that I should account for the existence of the tracks."

"And how is that, pray?"

"Well, you seem to think it very strange, perhaps, exceedingly strange, because you have discovered coal in this region. Why, not coal at the North? Have you never given any attention to your geology?"

"My geology!" my friend answered me, laughing. "No; I never possessed such a book."

"There is where you have been unfortunate. Every man ought to know something, at least, about the composition of the world in which he lives. Now, about the coal. I have heard one eminent writer explain the existence of coal even at the poles, like this: 'In the carboniferous period according to a well-known theory, the volume of the sun was such that the difference in temperature between the equator and poles was inappreciable. Immense forests covered the northern regions long before the existence of man, when our planet was subject to the prolonged influence of heat and humidity. These forests have been converted into coal beds by the weather, water, warmth, according to certain chemical changes, and to the process of coal formation.' Is not this explanation a reasonable one?"

"The theory, at least, explains the non-existence of wood here. It has probably all been converted into coal," replied Nelson.

"Very likely," said I.

"But," put in Scott, "Mr. Sanborn and I have made even a greater discovery than yourself."

Nelson sprang to his feet; he was all attention.

"Gold?" he inquired eagerly.

*Scott and I laughed heartily, since the very idea of finding gold in such an isolated and barren place seemed to us lu-*

dicrous, if not altogether absurd. Probably there had been no time since leaving Bar Harbor when I valued my stock in the "E and L" Mining Company at so low a figure as on this morning in Crystal Cave. The gold for which we were searching in the bowels of the earth, I believed now to be a nonentity.

Nelson looked provoked.

"No; not gold," I had said to him, "but something much better;—a way of escape from this place."

It was now Nelson's turn to laugh, and he improved the opportunity in a most sardonic manner.

"Where?" he inquired indifferently.

"Only a short distance away," I replied.

"It may be the path we are looking for,—who knows?"

"Possibly," I answered.

"Show me the path!"

"Shall we away?"

"At once," he answered promptly; and throwing his pack on his back, he started forward.

"But, wait!" I shouted, "you cannot find the passage alone."

"Very well;" said the impatient speculator, "but make haste, for I do believe that you fellows move slower than do the mills of the gods when grinding out men's fortunes."

It is not difficult for the observant reader to gather from his conduct and deportment thus far, a very accurate knowledge of the character of Henry Nelson. He was a young man having a very nervous temperament, and excitable by nature; and possessed a mind, though sound in many things, yet could be easily influenced by the proper causes. When the story of Captain Kidd's gold was first told to him, and the letter of E. L. shown him by his friends, Mattocks and Van Dyck, his whole soul he had surrendered to the project concocted by them for the purpose of its discovery. He, like Van Dyck, saw millions in it, and a sure road, swamped out for him through the dense forest of human destiny, leading unto fortune and fame. But, alas! How many are the *slips 'twixt the cup and the lip.*

There is only one path after all, that leads unto fortune, but few are they who find it.

In a world of grave doubt, uncertainty and wild speculations; and in a world where riches constitute the one grand object of human existence, the sensative, and undesigning mind, is too often made pliant by the finesse and shrewdness of the unscrupulous adventurer, who would most willingly sacrifice the happiness and prosperity of his fellow creatures for the hope of gaining a small quantity of gold. But in spite of all things else to the contrary, there is one great truth that the world, though to its sorrow, must not fail to recognize, and that is, that all the sordid wealth and vast accumulations of millionaires, cannot buy the salvation of a single man, nor the redemption of a lost soul. Here gold is powerless. In truth, there are many things even of a wordly kind, for which no gold can be substituted.

"Can gold calm passion, or make reason thine?  
Can we dig peace or wisdom from the mine?  
Wisdom to gold prefer; for 'tis much less  
To make our fortune than our happiness."

While the indefatigable Nelson was waiting for us, Jim White was awakened from his heavy slumbers in a most startling manner. I had called to him several times to wake up, but he did not move, or show any signs of life, save by his loud breathing. At last I became impatient, and taking my big Colt's revolver from my pack, I held it close to his ear and fired. The reader can well imagine the effect. The report was made three-fold louder on account of the acoustic properties of the cave.

White came to his feet in an instant, and looked wildly about; while the report of my revolver still rang loudly in his ears. He was told to take the joke good naturedly, and to prepare himself for a day's march through the unknown country. He did both; he could not very well do otherwise. We did not have much trouble in finding the passage-way, *but the warm atmosphere and the darkness made a mule of Jim White, in whose ears a thousand bells still tolled*



and he most stubbornly refused to follow us into the darkness. Finally he yielded to our request, through our threats to move on and leave him behind to become food for the devils into whose habitations we had evidently wandered.

The warm air, together with the darkness, caused him to anticipate queer things. He had a notion constantly in his mind, that we were walking into the hot furnaces of the wicked. But he feared the devil more.

While Scott and myself were wasting valuable time on Jim White, Nelson with his torch, well-trimmed and burning, was pushing forward far in advance of us.

This cavernous gallery, or tunnel into which we had entered was differently constructed from the one through which we had travelled the day previous. In that passage our voices sounded loud and distinct, and the air was so vibratory inside that even the faintest whisper was audible at the distance of forty feet or more. But, here, we became exceedingly frightened, when our efforts to converse with each other failed us entirely. We became suddenly speechless or deaf, I could not tell which, exactly. By the light of our torches we could see the passage gradually widen, as we proceeded; and the darkness grew less dense. The atmosphere in some places was cool, but more generally extremely warm, nearly unto suffocation.

While we were still advancing we saw light ahead which told us that we had nearly reached the end of our road. Perhaps it was the final end. None could tell. None dared to conjecture. The light was not the color of daylight, nor like that we had seen in Crystal Cave, but much redder; and every now and then it was darkened by passing clouds of smoke. As we advanced toward the light our speech gradually came back to us, so that we were able to discuss our situation. While we were just wondering, if the labyrinth would ever end, we suddenly stepped into an immense opening. The place was wonderfully deep. It was like a *huge chasm*, and in the bottom of this great underground cavity, burned the fires—perhaps of Satan himself.

*The place was of a circular shape, and passing entirely round it was a balcony formed of uneven rocks and high*

cliffs, jutting out from the sides of the cave, several feet above the fires that constantly burned in the bottom. There was a gallery extending around the cave, so that we were able to pass about the place on either side, and watch the fires burn, and hiss beneath us. The rocks below appeared to be all on fire; and gasses and subterranean vapors passed across the abyss. These were the clouds we had seen. Where we stood the air seemed deliciously cool,—*mirabile dictu*. It was at times hot: then exceedingly bracing. Overhead there was nothing save darkness to be seen.

On the opposite side of the chasm I saw Nelson standing upon a tremendously high boulder, that projected outward, looking down into the fire beneath. Jim White had at first been pale with fright, but when he saw no movement being made by visible hands to cast him into the fire his fear vanished. In the anticipation of danger a man is often made to act the coward, while in the realization of it the same man becomes brave, and often acquits himself like a true-born hero. Jim White became brave once more. I left Scott and White to amuse themselves in the best way they could and went round on the other side to meet Nelson, whom I found sitting on a high boulder, fearlessly looking down into the fire, and coolly contemplating the cause of the fires. I said to him jovially: "Well, old man, what do you think of this place? Do you suppose that we have been doomed to fast on fires?"

Nelson looked at me, and with a forced smile said: "I cannot endure the thought of being thrown *hiltter-skiliter* into this place."

"No," I answered with a shudder.

"How are we to escape from this conflagration?" asked Nelson.

"I don't know," said I; "I suppose we can go out by the same road we came in. Jim White thinks that these are the everlasting fires of the wicked."

"I am not so sure that he is mistaken," replied Nelson.

"Do you not know what this place is?" I asked, seeing that my friend was growing timid.

"I do not," replied he promptly.

"Well, this," said I, "is a volcano."

"Pshaw!" replied Nelson in doubt. "But after all perhaps you are right. If it is a volcano, it is certain that its fires have never yet seen daylight."

"No," I answered, "there are many such. Do you not know," I continued, "that there are volcanoes under the earth whose fires burn only for a time, and then gradually die away. Volcanic fires often become extinct after awhile."

"You would say, then," inquired the speculator earnestly, "that this is a volcano whose fires are cooling gradually away?"

"Yes."

"You are always on deck with your science," said Nelson.

"A good guide book," I answered, "in such a place as this."

"But supposing these fires continue to burn?" asked Nelson.

"All volcanoes," said I, "do not burst through the earth. There are often slight eruptions inside caused by the pressure of the heated vapors and gasses which accumulate. These internal eruptions cause sometimes only slight shocks like our earthquakes. In years to come, if this fire here continues to burn, the pressure of the gasses we see here may some day cause an eruption on the top of Green Mountain like that of Vesuvius."

I had now begun to work on the imagination of my friend. He was fast becoming interested in my geology.

"And the town of Bar Harbor," said he inquiringly, "a thousand years hence may be buried as deeply as was Pompeii or Herculaneum? I have often heard it said by people who have been abroad that the resemblance of Frenchman's Bay to the Bay of Naples is very striking."

"The fire is burning downward," said I. "The rocks beneath are probably combustible or igneous rocks."

"We must try to get out of this place," suggested Nelson.

"Yes."

"Wonder what there is beyond?" he inquired.

"We must find out," said I. "We have evidently gone wrong."

"Why?"

"We have not found the gold."

"I hope you are not discouraged," he asked.

"Yes."

"But I am sure there is gold here in some of these caves," returned the speculator.

"We have gained nothing so far by this bold adventure."

"But the letter must be true."

"I am worried about our friends," said I, "lest they may not be faring as well as ourselves."

"Oh, they are all right," replied Nelson carelessly.

"But we must find them," said I, "we can do nothing here alone. We should find our friends, and then try to discover the gold. A company can do nothing while its members are scattered about over the whole kingdom, each one doing a separate business. We are trying to find our friends, while they are endeavoring no doubt, to find us. Disunited, the objects of our corporation can never be accomplished. In union, you know, there is strength."

"You are right," cried Nelson, "we must unite our forces. Let us now try to escape from this fiery furnace, and trust in Providence for the rest."

I signalled to Scott and White to move on around the cave, and to meet Nelson and myself at the lower end. Here we found a deep cut leading downward from the fiery cavern—a gorge like that between two mountains,—and we descended into a place that resembled a green valley, well-filled with a luxuriant vegetation. This, indeed, was a wealthy country. The valley was extremely arborescent, and tall ferns grew among the dense shrubbery. Huge trees, resembling *Lepidodendrons*, towered above the inferior growth, or stood in groves shading the vegetation beneath with their wide-spreading branches. The sides of the valley were craggy; and large, bulky rocks projected outward in places.

Around the edges, the shrubbery appeared mostly arborescent. The bottom of the valley was flat and swampy.

in the center was visible, through the open forest, what appeared to be a small body of water, whose surface was smooth and clear as crystal. The trees were extremely foliaceous at the top, and their trunks were large and grew to the height of many feet. What a wonderful place! Everything about seemed deliciously fresh and verdant; and it was really a feast to our eyes—to view this subterranean garden,—which to me was like an oasis in the desert, after having seen nothing for the past two days, except cold, barren ledges and rocks.

A damp mist, or subterranean vapor swept through the valley, which kept the place wonderfully verdant and moist, and the waters that dripped at times from above, prevented suffocation possible to the vegetable life within. The vapors were probably caused by the fires we had seen above; and the air that crept in through the cracks and crevices swept through the valley.

Our pathway into the valley grew very vertiginous, winding in and out from behind high cliffs and bowlders, until it finally terminated in the dense shrubbery before us.

"A subterranean vale!" I cried.

"Thank God!" cried Nelson with delight, "we have at last come to a land flowing with milk and honey."

All unloosened our heavy packs, and threw them heavily upon the ground.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Along with me: I'll see what hole is here,  
And what he is that now is leaped into it.  
Say, who art thou that lately didst descend  
Into this gaping hollow of the earth?"

"A GRAND shot!" cried Scott.

"Be quick! my revolver!"

I commanded White to bring me my reliable six shooter.

*He obeyed promptly.*

*In another instant my weapon spoke out in a loud, sharp 'one.' There was a slight rustle among the ferns, and the*

animal at which I had fired scampered away, quickly betaking himself from our sight.

"You over-shot him," said Scott, after the smoke had cleared away.

"What's the rumpus?" inquired Nelson, who had not seen the animal.

"A deer!" I replied excitedly.

"Bah! What nonsense! There is no deer here."

"I certainly did see some animal," I persisted.

"Yes; Mr. Sanborn is right. I saw the animal myself," said Scott.

The animal, at which I had fired, looked about the size of a young deer, having a skin of a light greyish color. He was apparently feeding among the shrubbery, when I first saw him. Its instincts were evidently very acute, and its agility startled me, when I saw him leap into the shrubbery, at the report of my revolver. It was a grand shot, as Scott had said, and I was surprised to find that I had missed the animal, which was standing only a few feet away. I was exceedingly excited, and my hand was unsteady, since the sight of an animal here under the earth was a thing quite unexpected. I thought the animal a deer, and in my anxiety to capture some fresh meat for my party, I had after all missed my mark.

"An optical delusion," said Nelson.

"Oh, no," said I, "it was surely an animal of some kind."

"If that is so," said Nelson, "we can expect to see most anything here."

"Why not? These sudden transitions and strange sights bewilder me. But I do not like to undertake to refute or disbelieve my own eyesight. An animal here certainly does cap the climax of everything we have yet beheld. I never before dreamt of the existence of such a place as this."

"But," said Nelson cynically, "I would rather see the animal than to hear you talk about it."

"You may have a chance to try your own marksmanship yet," I replied; and then I continued argumentatively. "here is a valley as fresh and arboresecent as anything the

exists in nature belonging to the world above us. Here about us are trees, shrubbery, water and all that goes to sustain animal life. Why, then, should it be strange if an animal or two should be lurking in these jungles?"

"But, how did it get in here?" asked the speculator.

"Oh,—I don't know. How did we get in here?" I replied, evading the question of my friend.

Nelson laughed when he saw that I could not explain.

"I am waiting to hear your reason for the existence of this place," he added.

"Natural forces," I replied.

"Absurd!" returned the speculator.

"This is what one might call *lusus nature*."

"Very good," replied my friend. "Go on!"

"We know that the place does exist, so I presume there must be a cause for its existence," said I.

"And still you are right," put in Nelson.

"My reason," I continued, "may seem absurd concerning the existence of this strange place, yet since you have asked me for my opinion I will express it."

"Well, do," urged my friend.

"I believe," said I, "that at some time during the changes which have taken place in the formation of the earth's surface, that this place has been enclosed in such a peculiar and phenomenal way, as to have been left undisturbed by other forces in the form and condition that we now find it."

"Good! good!" shouted Nelson, applauding my theory.

"But tell us how it is kept so fresh and verdant."

Said I: "The mists or vapors are emitted from the crevices in the rocks on the sides of the valley, being created no doubt by the subterranean forces which are at play here. The steam probably is derived from the action of the fire above here upon the subterranean waters that exist near by. The water, too, is constantly dripping through the earth over our heads, all of which things tend to keep the vegetation *in a healthy condition*. Of course such places do not often exist, yet we can explain its possibilities perhaps. Again I say it is a freak of nature."

"Capital!" cried my friends.

"You are indeed a philosopher of cosmological repute," said Nelson jokingly.

"Thank you," said I doffing my hat.

"But you have not yet explained all," persisted my friend.

"I will do so presently, then," I replied.

"Tell us how all this vegetable life came here in the beginning. Where did it first originate?" he asked.

"The most difficult to answer of all your questions, thus far," said I. "But do you remember what I told you concerning the origin of coal in this region?"

"More geology, I suppose," said Nelson.

"Yes; I told you about the vegetable life that existed in the so-called carboniferous period. I reply, then, that every tree and bush that we see here, bears every likeness to the vegetation of that period. This spot which, I say, was once visible to no other intelligent eye save of God himself, has been shut in here, and by natural forces has been kept in a thriving condition."

"But how can vegetation flourish without the aid of the sun? How do you account for the animal life here?" asked Nelson.

"Hush! I see the animal," said I, raising my revolver.

A short distance away, I saw the same animal, or another of like kind, feeding among the tall ferns. He was about the size of a fawn, with a long and slender body. He had a long neck, a small head that he bore erect, giving him rather a distinguished mien.

"A young deer," said the speculator. "Take deliberate aim!"

I did as Nelson requested and then pulled the trigger. A sharp clicking of iron and steel followed, but no report was audible. The cartridge did not explode.

"A bucket of water!" shouted Nelson. The animal disappeared.

"I am more puzzled than ever," said Nelson taking his revolver from his pack, "but if there is a possibility of procuring fresh meat for supper, I will see what effect a cartridge or two may have upon these nimble creatures."



We stacked our packs, and crept on through the dense shrubbery in hot pursuit of the game which we had seen. Our mouths fairly watered for fresh meat, and the anticipation of tasting it before we slept was really a pleasant one. It encouraged us exceedingly.

The light of the sun did not penetrate or warm this underground garden, yet there seemed to be no darkness here, since everything in the valley was visible to our eyes. The mystery I have never yet been able to fathom. It was certainly a wonderful place.

The shrubbery, through which we were obliged to pass, we found most dense, so that we could only make slow progress. In places the land was high and dry, but more frequently wet and swampy. In the clearings we found the animals, such as I have described, feeding on the vegetable life about them. They were wonderfully shy and to get a shot at one of them was anything but an easy task. Their senses of hearing or smell seemed remarkably acute, so that it was impossible to shoot one of them.

So far we had fired several shots, and had been unsuccessful in our attempts to bring the animal down. His agility was much greater than the deer. In form and color he resembled it.

"We had better give up our chase," said Nelson finally becoming fatigued. "It is useless to try to shoot such weasels."

"I never saw such a shy animal," I replied. "They can dodge our bullets with the same ease and agility, that you and I could dodge a balloon."

"What are they?" asked my friend.

"I am sure I don't know," said I, "I know the animal exists, hence he is."

"Would you class him among animals of the carboniferous period?" asked Nelson curiously.

"I guess not."

"Where did he come from, then?"

"He must have been swept in here like ourselves." A reply very unsatisfactory to both myself and Nelson. "I do not wish to trouble the question of his existence."

"I had barely finished speaking when again rang out my friend's revolver clear and loud, and once more I saw the animal quickly disappear behind a large fern tree.

How damp and wet was everything about us. We were passing through what appeared to be a swamp of some little magnitude. Then we came to ascending ground, dry and with a hard bottom. Nelson was ahead and I was some little distance in advance of Scott and White, when I heard my friend speak to me in a low tone.

"Don't make any noise!" he ordered.

I stopped and motioned to Scott and White to halt. Then I heard Nelson fire and the report of his "Smith and Wesson" was instantaneously followed by a loud, piercing cry, like that of some animal in distress. I peered through the shrubbery, and in a small opening or clearing I beheld several of the animals. Nelson stood reloading his revolver. I went forward and asked: "Did you kill him?"

"I must have hit one of them," said he, "for did you not hear that pitiful cry?"

"Terrible!" I replied,

"Try a shot!" said the speculator.

I raised my revolver, and taking good aim at the largest animal, I blazed away. The smoke lifted slowly from before my eyes, and to my great surprise the animals were still feeding, and seemed not a bit afraid. Again I fired, but with the same luck as before. I could not hit them, notwithstanding the fact that I had always borne a high reputation for my marksmanship among skilled shooters. I was about to fire again when directly in range I saw a man with both arms uplifted standing in the center of the little flock.

"Hold!" cried Nelson in a startled voice, "don't fire!"

"A man!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Sure enough!" said Nelson, "this place is inhabited."

The man soon uttered a cry similar to that we had a moment before heard, and which we all supposed had been uttered by a wounded animal.

*At first, we thought the man might be one of our companions, and we all hastened forward to where he was standing*

But we soon learned our mistake, for here we beheld an individual shape such as none of us had ever seen or heard of before. Such a hideous face! Such an inhuman expression! Such a savage mouth and head!

His eyes were large and piercing and rolled about in their sockets with almost restless motion. He was a frightful looking object.

He stood looking at us in breathless amazement, or with fear in his heart, we could not tell which, nor did we care to conjecture, for his savage countenance frightened us.

The animals still stood feeding near by, nor did they attempt to run away like the others that we had seen previously. Occasionally they lifted their pointed noses from the ground, and looked at us as strangely as did their master.

The man was about four feet high, and very thickset, with a round, full, red face; wore a shaggy beard, and grizzly hair. He was terrifically bow-legged and was rather shabbily dressed in a suit of skins taken probably from the animals that inhabited the valley. He wore nothing on his head, and his feet and ankles were absolutely bare. He resembled in his mien the Esquimau, and was equally savage in his habits. His gentility was not of the highest order.

I approached the man who stood a few feet away looking at us so wildly, and again he uttered a cry like the others which we had heard. I spoke to him, advancing toward him with my revolver in my hand:

"Who are you?" I asked in a trembling tone of voice.

The man gazed at me strangely, and only grunted at first, but when my companions drew near, he answered me in a language that none of us understood. Then he spoke in plain English that none of us failed to comprehend.

"White men, whence comest thou?" he asked.

"From the bright world above," I promptly answered.

The man opened his savage jaws, and laughed sardonically.

"*Thou tellest me falsely, stranger. There is no such world. Years ago the sun went out, and has never shone since,*" said the man.

"When did you come here?" I asked, wondering what the man could mean.

He pointed me to some rocks near by, and said: "I was here before these!"

"Surprising!" I exclaimed.

"What an abominable liar, he is!" Nelson ejaculated.

"Absurd, man! you cannot be a thousand years old," I said to him.

"Yes," he answered, presently.

"Impossible!" said I; "the average life of man is only about sixty years, while but few men ever live to be a hundred."

Again the man laughed strangely.

"But I am immortal!" he replied calmly.

"Certainly, thou art a prodigy," I replied doubtfully to this mysterious being.

"All things are immortal here. Nothing ever dies in this valley."

"What strange place is this?" asked Nelson, anxiously.

"The valley of Immortal Life," promptly answered the man.

"And are you alone here?" I asked.

The man did not reply.

"What is there beyond?" I questioned.

"Death!" replied the man with a shudder.

"And these animals,—what are they?"

Again the man, for some reason known only to himself, did not answer me.

"Can they not be captured?" I persisted.

"Not by mortal hands."

"And do you eat them?"

"Never."

"How do you live here?" asked Nelson.

"Come with me, strangers, and I will show you my household."

The mysterious being for the first time since we had met him, moved from his tracks in which he had all the time been standing, and started off along a narrow path winding

through the shrubbery. He did not exactly walk, but rather waddled along, and often stopped to get his wind, for he could go only a short distance without being obliged to rest. He could talk good English, but his voice was squeaky, so that he squealed rather than talked.

He had beckoned to us to come along; and with strange and doubtful hearts we followed closely behind him.

## CHAPTER IX.

"I long to hear the story of your life,  
Which must take the ear strangely."

WE soon came to a small cave in the rocks, and here dwelt our mysterious host. In the center of his house, was a small table uniquely built of rocks and reeds, while in one corner was a fire-place, around which was piled up a considerable quantity of cut wood. The floor of the hut was strewn with dry ferns, and the sides were lavishly draped with branches of trees that grew in the valley. There was inside a pleasant odor, and I noticed that some kind of frankincense was kept constantly burning about the room.

We entered in silence, and was told by our strange host to be seated. We sat down, and looked inquiringly to one another, while our host left us. Presently he returned, carrying in his hand a string of some kind of fish, and building up a roaring fire, he began to prepare our lunch. All sat looking on curiously, and watched in wonder our host, who moved about the hut like one who is sole master of his own household. The odor of the frying-pan was, indeed, most delicious to our nostrils for we were all hungry, it now being five o'clock in the afternoon, and we had eaten scarcely anything, since the previous morning in Crystal Cave.

The table being bountifully spread we were invited most cordially to move up, and in a few minutes, were eating *ravenously of the food, like hungry wolves maddened by the chase.* Fried fish, and some kind of fruit, having the *appearance and taste of beech-nuts* composed the supper.

These fish varied in size like brook trout, but were very hearty, since none of us were able to eat a whole one, notwithstanding the immensity of our appetites; not even Jim White, whose appetite was measured only by the amount of food sat before him, could eat only half a one about six inches in length.

After supper we again became seated about the hut, and were each given a pipe, filled with some kind of a narcotic or drug, having the appearance of finely cut hemlock bark. We were requested to enjoy an after tea smoke. We all did as told, and for my part I began to feel that we were being most royally entertained.

After I had lighted my pipe and had drawn a few whiffs I began suddenly to feel drowsy, and as I smoked on thoughtlessly, I noticed my companions, one by one, falling into a deep, lazy sleep. The next moment all things in the hut began to grow extremely small, and my host who sat smoking and grinning simultaneously, directly in front of me began to grow in my sight smaller and smaller, until at last he became only a molecule of humanity, and finally dwindled away into nothingness. All became darkness, so that I was not able to see anything in the room. I was asleep.

About an hour afterwards I was awakened by my host, who told me to sit up. He stood before me smiling savagely, and his thick red lips were drawn apart in such a way as to expose his large ugly teeth. My companions were still sleeping. I was still in a drowse. The man left me for a moment, and brought forth an earthen flagon, and pouring some kind of liquor into a little vessel made of bark, he bade me drink. The liquor had the color of wine, and had a most delicious taste. After I had quaffed the liquor, the stupor left me, and I became slightly exhilarated.

"Come with me!" commanded my host, advancing toward the door.

I followed him. He led me along a narrow path, and finally we came to a small field enclosed by a low stone wall. *I saw some kind of cattle feeding within. They appeared to be cows at first, but very much smaller, and had neither*

horns nor tails. Their bodies were long and their legs short. I had never imagined the existence of such a peculiar species of animal. Not being interested in agricultural pursuits I did not even conjecture in my mind as to what kind of animals these might be.

"This is my farm," said the man; "I have lived here many years."

"When did you come here?" I asked.

"I came in here just a thousand years ago, two nights ago," answered my host.

"And can you not get out of this place?"

The man smiled and said: "I have no desire to leave this place."

In the field which we had entered were small groves of conifers from which the man had gathered his fruit such as we had eaten for our supper. I saw some more of the animals such as we had hunted on that day, and they seemed very tame.

"These are my pets," said the man.

"What kind of animals are these?" I asked.

"I don't know," said he.

"Perhaps they are *Xiphodon gracile*?" I conjectured.

"I don't know," promptly answered my host. "I found them here."

"Do you never eat them?"

"Never."

I was shown about many curious places, containing many useful things for the everlasting existence of man in the subterranean world, and was told by my host that the liquor which I had just drank had a tendency to renew life, and that by constant use of it, a man could live here forever. I was indeed, surprised at this astounding fact.

Said my host: "I have lived here for many centuries, after having already passed the mortal limit in the upper world."

"How do you reckon the time here with no time-piece, and without the sun's risings and settings to guide you?" I asked.

"By my sleep," said he.

"How?"

"When I sleep," said the man, "I know that it is night in the outer world, and when I have slept three hundred and sixty-five times, I realize that I have completed a whole year."

"But," said I, "you have not yet told me from whence you came. Where did you live before you came into this place?"

"I was cast into this place from out of a ship," said the man promptly. "Do not ask me again!" he added fiercely.

"Why?"

"Do not connect me with the outer world. I had forgotten all many years ago, and was living here in happiness by myself."

When the man had spoken he stood staring at me in a wild way, and began to tremble nervously, and approaching me asked, "Why are you here?"

"For gold," I replied timidly.

"Ah, ah!" the man laughed scornfully.

"Gold?" he hissed, "didst thou sayst gold?"

"Yea, gold," I replied, "my friends and I have been wandering many days in the cave."

"And the girl?"

"The girl!" I cried. "To whom do you refer?"

I did not comprehend the meaning of the man's words.

Girl? Surely, there was no girl here to my knowledge. "Who can be the feminine one of our party?" I asked myself. I thought my host was joking me.

"Didst she come here for gold, too?" he asked with a savage grin.

"Your words surprise me," I answered. "I know not what you mean."

The strange man approached me, and whispered in my ear: "*Did you never know a girl by the name of Kate Reddington?*"

"*Kate Reddington!*" I stammered hoarsely, "what do you know of Kate Reddington? You who have been here a thousand years. She was drowned only a few years ago. *She is dead.*"



The man withdrew from me a short distance, but eyed me suspiciously. Said he gravely:

"I asked you, if you knew a girl by that name. You seem agitated, stranger."

"Yes, I knew such a girl. I am surprised, however, to hear you call her by name."

"She was your affiance!" said this mysterious being.

"Who are you, man? speak!" I cried excitedly.

"'Tis better that you do not know," he replied coolly.

"Why?"

"You must leave here," said the man, whose ugly countenance grew still more ugly to look upon, at the mention of worldly things.

I was growing frightened of the strange man, and was about to give up my interview and leave him, when he said to me: "There is danger ahead."

"For whom?" I quickly asked.

"For all who search for the gold of the world's greatest pirate, Captain Kidd!"

"What strange being art thou? And do you know concerning the gold of Captain Kidd?" I asked almost breathless with astonishment.

"I know," said he, "many more things than I wish I did."

"And is it buried here?" I asked.

My mind had now been shrewdly turned toward the hope of things pertaining to our enterprise. I had begun to believe that at last I had found a man who could unlock for me the secret vaults that contained the hidden treasures. He knew all things, and very likely he knew the path that led to wealth untold.

The man only grunted in reply.

"Did you say that the gold is here?" I repeated my question.

My host shook his head.

"If you know about all things here below the earth, surely you can tell me the way to the hidden treasures."

"A very long road,——a long road, stranger," replied my host in a manner that discouraged me.

"To what place?" I asked.

"To wealth. But how short is the way, when once travelled."

"Why do you not tell me?" I gasped.

"It is best that I should not tell you. Here beneath the sword of the bright world above, I am enjoying an eternal existence, but if I should go so far as to explain those things to which I have already alluded, I would be speculating in worldly matters, and might soon rue the day that you and I ever met. I am doomed here to immortal bliss, though apparently I am but a wild, savage man for mortal eyes to feast upon."

Neither of us spoke for sometime, but stood *vis a vis* in breathless silence. At last my host spoke; and I was even more surprised than at any previous time to hear the man say: "I am really sorry for you Rudolph Sanborn."

I started and looked at the man in strange wonder.

"Why?" I stammered inquiringly.

"Have you no other thought," said he in a reproving spirit, "higher or nobler than that which you now entertain for gold. But yesterday your thoughts were all for the safety of your lost friends. What has so changed you?"

"Ah, yes,—my friends. I had forgotten them in the excitement of the hour," I said much embarrassed.

"And Kate Reddington?" queried my host mysteriously.

"Why do you speak of her who is dead?" "Ah, poor Kate!" I mourned. "But what can you know of this girl?"

My host laughed scornfully, and evaded the question. Said he: "Your friends are in danger; and I am surprised to see you tarry here in idle conversation while they are beseeching your assistance."

"Let us go back to my companions," I said anxiously.

"Surely, you will accept my hospitality until the morning. You are in need of rest."

"I will go back and consult my friends," I replied, moving nervously up the path that led to the hut.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Who do you suppose that old fossil is, and where in the world did he come from? He is a prodigy indeed! Wonder if he is carboniferous or tertiary?"

It was Nelson who asked the question so very difficult for any of us to answer; and he eyed me in a teasing way.

"He is the toughest specimen to look upon that I have ever met," said Scott.

"He is a gintee customer I reckon," put in Jim White, "but I wouldn't be much surprised to learn that he is old Bill Kidd himself,—the very identical individual that we have been looking for."

When White had finished his harangue, I was about to express an opinion concerning our host, when the latter entered the room where we were all seated, and commenced preparing our breakfast. It was now morning, and we had planned to leave this place that day. There was a mystery about everything, and a suspense here too hard for mortals to endure. We ate our fish and nuts as on the night before, and were again offered the pipes, but we all refused to do any more smoking at the expense of our genial host. Our refusal to smoke with him irritated him greatly, and he threatened to turn us from his doors, and commit us all unto eternal damnation, unless we accepted his gifts which he might offer, of whatever nature. We feared his pipes on account of the deep sleep they had brought us on the previous night, but when we saw that we had injured the feelings of our sensitive host we concluded to smoke with him.

This time the bark had the opposite effect, and instead of putting us to sleep, it acted upon us like a tonic and drove every kind of care and trouble from our minds. After smoking a short time we all felt much refreshed, and had now expressed our intention of leaving our strange host and returning to the place where we had left our packs.

"Wouldst thou leave a land like this for the hope of gold?" he asked of me.

"And does he know?" inquired Nelson in surprise.

"*Cognoscit omnia*," I answered in the Latin tongue, *which my friend readily understood.*

Again the old man asked: "Wouldst thou search for gold rather than happiness?"

"Do you know aught of the gold?" asked Nelson earnestly.

Our host made him no reply at first, but after a few moments of silence he answered, "I knowst all things here below."

"Show us then the path which leads to the hidden treasures!" cried the speculator.

"Stranger be calm," the man replied, "there is but one road to wealth, and it is the same which leads to happiness."

"What road is that?" asked Nelson eagerly.

"The right one," replied the man with a smile which was anything but pleasing to look upon.

"Look here stranger, do not trifle with us, but if you know anything about the gold, tell us of it," said Nelson.

"I know all about it. It drove me to this place, and here I am happy. Hence my reason for saying that the path to wealth is the same in my case as the path to happiness."

"How came you here in the first place?" asked Nelson hopefully.

The man did not reply at first, but began to walk to and fro for several moments, with his hand to his head, as if trying to recall the past.

"Let us try one more drink from the flagon," said he, "perhaps it will bring activity to the brain."

After we had all imbibed, our strange host drew himself up to the little table, and with his eyes fixed upon us he replied: "I came here by accident."

"Tell us what fate drove thee here," we all shouted simultaneously.

"I fell overboard from out of a ship, and was hurled into utter darkness, where I roamed for many days until finally I emerged into the light and came to a place where all is bliss and peace."

"What ship?" we asked.

"Do not question me too closely my friends in regard to my worldly career, for my life will not bear investigation."

The fierce, savage man bowed his head, and did not raise it again for several minutes.

"He has yet a conscience left," I thought.

When he spoke again he said: "I have never before experienced a feeling of remorse nor felt the pangs of wicked conscience until this moment. Who are you?" he hissed. "Have you been sent here to taunt me, and punish me for my wicked deeds before I escaped the clutches of a heartless man?"

When he had spoken he drank again from the flagon and began to laugh heartily, at the same time throwing himself at full length upon the soft ferns about the floor of the hut. Soon he arose. "You have come for Captain Kidd's gold?" he questioned, having now taken a sitting posture.

"You are right," replied Nelson with enthusiasm.

"The gold was brought here a thousand years ago," said our host.

"Oh no; not so long ago," I answered.

"I know the exact number of years that have since elapsed," said our host sternly.

"Where is the gold buried?" asked Nelson.

The strange man again shook his head.

"What do you know about it, then? Tell us!" we cried.

"It was a thousand years ago when Captain Kidd sailed and brought his stolen treasures to this mysterious place," said the man.

"You are mistaken as to the date," said Nelson.

"Just a thousand years ago," persisted the man.

"How can you tell?" asked Nelson, "since here there is neither day nor night."

"I know the years by the number of times I have slept since I came here, for a man sleeps only at night."

"That might have been the custom in your day," replied Nelson, "but how many times have you slept here?"

The man answered promptly: "365,000."

"Just a thousand years," said Nelson; "but Captain Kidd sailed in the latter part of the seventeenth century, did he not?"

"Yes; just a thousand years ago," persisted the strange man.

The man had probably given us the correct figures in regard to the number of times he had slept since he had been living under ground, but was evidently mistaken about the number of years that had elapsed since he had left the scenes of the outer world. He had measured the time by his naps, which with the aid of his flagon and pipes had been most frequent; and so he persisted that he had been under ground just a thousand years, which statement we did not willingly accept. It was plain that if the man spoke the truth concerning Captain Kidd he had been here at least through two centuries, and this fact seemed to us certainly impossible. But if he still persisted that he had come here with Captain Kidd we could not very well doubt his story, knowing now as we did the strange character of the man.

"Who were you before you assumed this coil of immortality?" asked Nelson.

*"I was a pirate!"*

"And here you have been changed into an angel?" replied the sarcastic Nelson.

"I have always enjoyed peace and happiness here before you people came here to taunt me," said the man savagely.

"Did you come here with Captain Kidd?" I asked.

Here the man told his story: "It was a thousand years ago that I sailed with the bold pirate king, Captain William Kidd—a heartless man. In his ship, the *Adventure Galley*, I rode the seas of the stormy Atlantic in search of prizes and plunder. I was a sailor on board that pirate ship, and was one of the men detailed for duty on the night when the gold was brought ashore to be hidden in the secret passages under an island, but I was washed overboard by a sea, and was thrown by another monstrous wave into a great dark cavern, where I wandered without food for two or three days, and having entered a certain passage-way, I wandered on through many dangerous places until finally I came to this place, which to me has been a haven of eternal rest. I have never looked for gold because I have no use for it. This valley constitutes a world of my own, but I have the faculty

of telling what lies beyond. Your friends are not far away from here and are exposed to many perils. After they have been rescued, come back to me, and I will reveal to you the secret of the hidden treasure."

"But can you not tell us now?" cried Nelson impatiently.

The man shook his head, and replied: "Your friends are in peril."

"But tell us, O stranger!" I urged "if you knew a man who sailed with Kidd in those days whose name might answer to the initials E. L.?"

"Everard Lehane? ah, indeed, I knew him. He was the boldest, and most heartless villain that ever disgraced the deck of a pirate ship," said the man snapping his words through his savage teeth.

Again he tipped the flagon, and drank this time to the very dregs. Five minutes later, our host became beastly and insensibly intoxicated, and rolled from his stool onto the floor. He was in a dead sleep. As he fell over, I noticed a small book slide from his bosom upon the ferns near his side. I eagerly picked it up, and opened it. On the fly-leaf of the book was plainly written the name, *Hendrick Vanderdonk!*

## CHAPTER X.

"This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit."

"HURRAH!"

"Halloo! What's up?"

"Hurrah! Whoop!"

"Is that you, Nelson?"

"Whooooop!"

"Halloo! What is it?"

"A boat!" cried Nelson jubilantly.

"A boat, did you say?"

"Yes."

"One of our boats?" I questioned hopefully.

"No. Come here, quick!"

I was making my way through the thick ferns, when I heard my friend cry out; and on being informed that he had found a boat,—which I had eagerly hoped might be one of our own boats,—I was not long in hastening to his side. Nelson had been walking on ahead, and I had for several minutes lost sight of him among the dense shrubbery. Having left our host asleep on the floor where he had fallen, we had been back to the place where we had left our packs, and were now travelling through the valley in search of some pathway, or road that might take us from this mysterious abode to our friends.

Our host had informed us that our companions were not far away, and that they were in danger; and that we must first find them before he would tell us where the gold which we sought, was buried. We all felt absolutely certain now that this old ex-pirate possessed an abundance of knowledge concerning the hidden plunder of the pirate king, which had been concealed in one of these underground caves, nearly two centuries before. His strange words had given us this firm conviction. It was evident that he knew something at least about the gold, for he had voluntarily afforded us this information. But, why should he say ought of Kate Reddington, the girl whom I had once loved, and had promised to marry? This part of his great knowledge struck me the more forcibly, since I was made to believe that he was something more than immortal. I believed him a marvelous man, with a mind that could only exist in the world of spiritual beings. He was certainly superhuman; and this much he had told us.

Kate Reddington I knew to be dead. Before my own eyes I had seen her fall from my boat, and sink beneath the deep waters from which she had never returned. What possible knowledge could this old pirate possess of her death, or the relation she had borne to me in life? I could not understand it, though I had thought of it only lightly after my first interview with my host.

Kate and myself were spending the season of 18—, at Bar Harbor. We had both been guests of the St. Sauveur



hotel. In the fall we were to have been married, and amid the quiet pleasure of this popular resort we were very happy in making the necessary plans and preparations for our wedding, which would be grand, brilliant, though not affecting. We had been at Bar Harbor only a month, enjoying ourselves as tourists do, mingling with the gay and giddy throng, and attending hops, teas and social seances. It was one bright afternoon in the month of August that Kate and myself went out onto the smooth waters of the bay for a pleasant row. It was the first sailing excursion of any kind that we had undertaken for the season. Kate had always acted shy of a small boat, and was timid when upon the water. But this day I had persuaded her to take the sail, for I was growing exceedingly tired of riding. She consented and we had rowed our boat far down the harbor. Kate had sat all the while in the stern steering the boat, when all at once she asked me to let her manipulate the oars. I had yielded to her request, and we were in the act of changing our positions when Kate who had now stepped up onto one of the thwarts in the boat, lost her balance and fell into the water. I reached for her as quickly as possible, but before I could grasp her she had sunk beneath the water. She did not come up again. I was much overcome by the blow her untimely death had dealt me, and fell back into the bottom of the boat in a faint, in which helpless condition I was picked up by a fisherman late that afternoon, and taken back to Bar Harbor.

No wonder it was, then, that I should be slightly startled to hear her name spoken by my strange host, this mysterious man, whom I had now every reason to believe was Hendrick Vanderdonk, the sailor alluded to by E. L. (Everard Lehané), in the letter.

Nelson had discovered a small boat resting on the shore near the little stream whose waters we had seen when we first entered the valley.

"A real boat," said Nelson, when I had arrived. "A lucky strike for us."

"*Ben trovato*,—well found," I replied.

"We can now descend the stream," said my friend. "But how can we transport our baggage?"

I thought a moment, and then replied:

"We can build a raft, and tow it behind us."

"Capital! we'll do it," said my friend enthusiastically.

"Very well," said I. "Have you got the axe?"

"It is behind with our packs. Come, hurry up, you fellows?" shouted Nelson to White and Scott who had been left behind to transport our dunnage.

As soon as we had got the axe we set to work cutting and felling some of the large fern trees that stood near by, and in the course of another hour we had built a raft, and had bound it securely with long wiry reeds, and some rope yarns.

Upon this raft we stacked our baggage, and put White and Scott in command of it.

Nelson and myself got into the little boat which we had found, and then we all began to descend the stream. The boat was probably the property of our host, and was constructed from roots, covered with bark, and was so narrow that it was with difficulty that Nelson and myself could keep her upon her bottom. The stream was narrow, but exceedingly deep, and notwithstanding the fact that the water was very clear, we could not see any bottom.

We rowed steadily on, perhaps for an hour, and our boats glided along over the almost motionless waters, as calmly as a beautiful swan in a mill-pond, so that our hopes rose high, as we anticipated a delightful sail upon a never-ruffled sea.

Even our modern fern trees make up the most beautiful kind of scenery afforded by nature; but here they stood on this morning, robed in all their ancient loveliness. How beautiful the picture! How delightful our sail on this morning! There were no boisterous waves, no high winds to molest us, no storms, no anxiety about the weather, and no fear for the tempest. All was peace and hope about us, like that deep silence which broods over the sleeping world at night.

Our course was by water through the center of the valley, and peacefully we glided down the stream, along by the

fresh, flowerless foliage, and the green, shady shrubbery that grew along the sides of the water.

“Faintly as tolls the evening chime,  
Our voices keep tune, and our oars keep time.”

Nelson and myself did all the rowing while White and Scott looked after the raft. Jim had now much of his old-time courage left, and had during the past few hours become once more that “bold man of the sea,” as he was in his sea-going days. Like the duck he longed for the water, and was happy when upon it. He loved the light. As long as he could see the things about him without the aid of artificial light, such as the lantern or torch afforded, he felt perfectly at ease concerning his safety. But in the great darkness of the cave he was unlike himself, for he was timid and afraid,—afraid perhaps lest some unseen hand should grasp him and hurl his wicked soul into an endless eternity.

The present happy home of one who had been so wicked as the old ex-pirate in the outer world, gave White some consolation in the dreadful thought which his mind had always held, that the wicked should receive eternal damnation after death. He would be willing to live here forever. But unlike the old pirate, his thread of mortal life had not yet been all drawn out, and to commit suicide by remaining here would be an unpardonable sin. And, then, could he remain here and live like his host? The question was a doubtful one. True it was that he was in the valley of immortal life.

Remarkable as it may seem to his former comrades and associates, Jim White had been changed into a different man, as to his heart. The perilous adventures through which he had passed had softened his hard soul. The fear of death had been the means of turning his mind from worldly things to spiritual dangers. Perils of the sea were nothing compared with those of eternity. All these things *he had begun* to consider in a serious frame of mind. He *was more interested* with these thoughts, than with the *expedition in whose employ* he was.

Fear is frequently the stepping stone to individual reform. To fear the condemnation of the world is often necessary in the man whose heart is inclined to be drawn into the temptations and sins which daily surround him, and in order to keep him safely within the bounds of uprightness and honesty in his social relations with his fellow men. To fear God is to love him. White's fear—call it what we may—had at first, as the reader already knows, been painful in the extreme, but had gradually relaxed its severity upon him, until it had softened and become amalgamated with his very existence. It was a part of him, this fear of an unknown something, the very presence of which he feared, and whose influence he constantly felt about him.

White's fear in the darkness had become awe, and this awe which he had felt had finally worked itself into a kind of reverence for better things in the future world.

As we proceeded, the stream grew much narrower, and more winding than in the upper part of the valley.

Judging from the shoal water into which our boat had drifted, we were fast nearing the end of the stream.

On each side of the narrow stream stood many tall ferns with their palm-like fingers spreading over the water above our heads, forming an arcade, through which we were to pass.

The water here deepened again, and through this arcade, whose roof was composed of thick foliage we paddled our boats, or pulled them along by means of the shrubbery growing along the banks of the stream. There is probably no foliage in the world that exceeds in beauty the fern.

The beauty of the scenery here was such as one can only imagine, for no words or pen can adequately describe it. The tall *Lepidodendrids* with their pine-like leaves towered above the rest of the shrubbery, while the fruit-bearing conifer dotted the valley. The arcade through which we sailed on this morning was most beautiful in structure and appearance.

Then we emerged from the stream into what appeared to be a small, circular-formed lake whose waters were very

smooth and silvery, and whose shores were composed of some crystalline substance. There was some kind of fish jumping about, or breaking the calm surface of the lake, no doubt, for air. Our efforts to catch them resulted much the same as did our attempts to shoot the animals, which we had seen. We fished long and caught nothing. Once I caught a glimpse of one, as he leaped from the water. I saw that it was in kind the fish such as our host had given us while we tarried with him. They had not the appearance of our modern fish, but were evidently the last remains of the finny tribe of some by-gone epoch.

Possibly they might have been related to the ganoids that are said to have existed in the mesozoic time. But to what period they really did belong it might be hard for even an experienced ichthyologist to have told. Their present existence was truly a mystery that might have puzzled the most level-headed cosmographer as well. Of course Nelson asked me to explain their existence which very thing I did, but I will not harass the reader with the opinion that I gave him. It passed.

The land about the lake was low and marshy, and the shrubbery grew only in small lengths.

About the edges of the water were numerous birds of some kind, wading about and apparently feeding. They were gigantic birds between the loon and ostrich in structure and size, with long necks, and small peaked heads, with bills like the crane, and teeth like the reptile. Some of them appeared to me to be from six to seven feet in height, and though I saw them only once, they were most hideous to look upon. When I saw them they were striding about, stretching now and then their long necks out to an enormous length, something on the plan of the Klu Klux, and opening their crocodile jaws to suck in the foul atmosphere about them.

The air which over-hung the lake was extremely bad, and *the obnoxious stench that arose from the stagnated waters nearly choked us.* I raised my revolver and fired into the *birds, and when the smoke of my revolver had cleared away, they had disappeared from view.*

"Hi, hi, hi;" chuckled Nelson. "Where have they gone?" he asked in surprise.

"Don't ask me. I am done trying to clear away these dense clouds of mystery, that hang so immovably before our eyes," I answered in a perplexed tone.

"But where do you suppose they have gone?" he repeated, standing up in the boat with his revolver in hand, and looking about eagerly for the game.

"They have crawled into their holes." Shouted Scott from the raft.

"And I reckon they have taken good care to haul their holes in arter 'em," put in Jim White in an impressive manner.

In spite of all conjectures, and opinions expressed by our party, the birds did not appear again. They had flown away suddenly. In front of us we saw the cliffs once more rising perpendicularly to meet the roof of the great subterranean cavern. Directly ahead of us the waters seemed to stretch on into the dusky unknown, dark, weird, awful, like the River of Death! We rowed on and in another moment we were in total darkness. The stream, nevertheless, still continued. We followed it, and soon found ourselves in one of the dark labyrinths that led from the valley. Again we lighted our torches, and felt our way along the sides of the passage, and pulled our boat along the best we could, until we came back into the light of the valley. Afterwards I had traced our course, and learned that it had been a semi-circular one, although it was my opinion at the time that we were following a direct course. My compass had deceived me.

We were in another part of the valley. Our misadventure had confused us, and not knowing now which way to turn, we clung to the stream which still flowed on, until at last our boats grounded at a place where the stream seemed to terminate.

No sooner had our boats touched the shore than a man emerged from the impermeable shrubbery, and approached us in a menacing manner. His eyes were large and fierce and his whole frame seemed to tremble with rage. W

quickly perceived his anger, and had begun to feel frightened, lest he would come among us and tear us from limb to limb, for we now recognized the utter worthlessness of our revolvers in this strange country.

Presently, however, the angry expression of his face relaxed, the eyes grew smaller and less fierce, and in another instant, the man's face had assumed an almost pleasant expression, and he began to laugh, so loudly that the whole valley rang with the echo of his ponderous voice, as if he was intensely enjoying the joke which he had cunningly perpetrated. Then, fear left our hearts, and a few moments later we had landed on the shore, and were all warmly grasping the hand of the ex-pirate.

"Didst thou think oh, foolish men, that you could make your escape from this valley in my boat?" said he almost kindly.

We all nodded our heads in silence.

"Ah, that was a most foolish, proceeding!" he continued. "Never can mortals leave this place in the boat of one who has become immortal."

"Tell us good friend!" I cried earnestly, "where the path is that leads from this place."

The man shook his head, and answered, "Broad is the gate, but narrow is the way that——"

"We must find it," said Nelson interrupting him.

"You will not leave here to-day," said our host in reply.

"Yes," I exclaimed, "we must leave here. We have already tarried too long. Our friends are in danger."

"Your friends are already safe," said the man with a grim smile, which displayed his savage teeth.

"Safe?" I asked, "How? Where?"

"I will lead thee to them presently," replied the pirate.

"Show us the way!" I cried with joy.

"Follow me, then," growled the man. But whether the reply was in jest or earnest, we could not tell.

For the second time through the jungles of the beautiful *cave*, our strange host led us, and we followed him with *willing hearts*, in our present hope of meeting our lost *companions*.

## CHAPTER XI.

"I have been studying how I may compare  
This prison where I live unto the world:  
And for because the world is populous,  
And here is not a creature but myself  
I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out."

CHEER after cheer went up from the throats of jubilant men, which echoed and re-echoed across the valley, as we neared the home of Hendrick Vanderdonk. Five strange looking men were standing near the entrance of the hut, swinging their caps, and shouting and dancing about like jolly good sailors, elated with the thought of having arrived on shore. But by their blue blouses and dark pantaloons, I recognized them as sailors belonging to our own expedition.

Van Dyck was there, looking care-worn and anxious; and amid the loud shouts of all the men, I could hear his voice ringing out most audibly above the others: "Hurrah, Sanborn!"—"Hurrah, Nelson!" But Mattocks, where was he? I did not see him, and I concluded that he must have gone inside the hut. He must be there.

Soon we came up to our companions, and there was a general hand clasping all round. Oh, the joyfulness of that hour!

Poor Van Dyck fell upon my neck, and wept tears of happiness, mingled with those of woe. Yes; he wept. To him, Nelson and myself were like old, dear friends, who had just for the moment awakened from death, and stepped from the grave only for the purpose of bidding him adieu. The thought of even leaving us again, stung him to the heart. His face wore the expression of great hardships and dangers, through which he had passed.

"I thought you dead, my friend," he cried embracing me; and then turning to Nelson he said: "Ah, my dear Nelson, I had given up the hope of seeing you again. I prayed and hoped, however, that we should meet again sometime, and my prayer you see has been duly answered."

"Yes," said Nelson. "Hope is everything. If it were not for this little ray of hope to lighten man's dark mind, the



heart would often break. It is the anchor of the soul, you know. My dear fellow," added Nelson, "how glad I am to see your face once more. Tell us here you have been?"

The sailors were still dancing and shouting, and I had asked Van Dyck: "Who are these men? They did not come in our boat."

"No; these are men who came in boat No. 3, the Radiate—one of the provision boats, you'll remember. Their boat was wrecked on that terrible night, and all hands were thrown into the cave by a sea. One of them, Tom Larkin, the fellow standing there, belonged to our boat. Don't you recognize him?"

"Oh, yes I do. But," I stammered, "where is Mattocks?" I had looked into the hut, and had not seen my friend. I had become anxious.

"Mattocks! Have you not seen him?"

Van Dyck seemed as greatly surprised as myself.

"Why, no!" I answered. "Did you not accompany him?"

"Only for a short distance," answered Van Dyck in a way that startled me. "I will tell you," he continued nervously, "how it happened that I lost him and his companions."

The men had now stopped their cheering, and all of them save Jim White and Larkin had gone into the hut to partake of the hospitality of the ex-pirate, who was waddling about among his guests, treating them to his pipes, his flagon, his fishes and his fruits.

Jim White and Larkin were engaged in earnest conversation just outside the doorway. They talked and smoked and laughed heartily. These men had been old shipmates together on many a voyage in the bright world above, and to see these old pals meet after a few hours absence, which to them seemed like years, and to listen to their tales of adventure, subterranean and otherwise, was really amusing.

*Scott, to my great surprise, had mingled with the other sailors, and had entered the hut to partake of their social repast.*

*Van Dyck had a strange story to tell us of his wanderings, and he had entered the subterranean world. Nelson and*

myself gave him our attention while he proceeded to relate to us his adventures under the sea.

His experience during the past few days had been equally novel and thrilling as our own, and he had braved manifold dangers before having found the sailors belonging to boat No. 3. By accident he had strayed away from Mattocks and his men, and had got lost in the cave. Like Nelson and myself, he had all the time supposed that our boat had been swept on to the beach, and that we had landed on the island. It was not until having wandered about for several hours in the darkness of the cave, that the truth of his situation had really dawned upon him. Then, he was horrified. Alone in a submarine cavern! The thought was dreadful!

His friends had wandered away from him, having gone he knew not where. He was alone.

The only company to interest, or cheer him, was the little pale light of his lantern, which now shone but dimly. In another half hour it was out forever.

No food, no light, no help! His situation was most perilous. It startled him to find himself alone, and he cried out wildly, aye, madly for help,—for his friends, for the assistance of high heaven! But, alas! no aid was near, save the aid of God. No visible hand was about him, so he invoked the assistance of the Invisible One, and a voice full of cheer whispered to him from across the cavern.

He took courage and struggled desperately against his fate. How his heart sank within his bosom at that moment when he had first realized his peril! In a submarine cavern! The thought even was dangerous, but the realization of it was most appalling.

When he had lost sight of Mattocks and his party, he had entered one of the short ramifications of the cavern, and had passed through a long vestibule opening into another cave, which he could imagine was much larger than the one from which he had just come. In this latter cave, wonderful to relate, he could see obscurely all things around him. It was a wondrous light which came from beneath the water, a submarine twilight. Was it daylight which entered there? Y

could not tell. Perhaps it was the light of the outer world creeping into the dark world below, through a hundred dozen of orifices of this great labyrinth of passages, which might be exposed somewhere to the outer world by the low tides of the ocean. The light was strange; it was unworldly, and he imagined that he had suddenly been transported to another planet. Whence it came, he could only conjecture. He saw no openings in the stony ceiling, no crack in the roof, not a window in the massive walls. The grotto was evidently shut in on all sides.

Beneath his feet was water standing in pools on the floor of the cavern; and sea-plants, weeds, shell-fish, and submarine vegetation adorned and beautified the place. The whole vault into which he had passed, the top, the walls and floor, was tapestried with that prodigious efflorescence of the sea, rarely seen by human eyes.

Under the water beneath he could see something having the aspect of plants, sea-flowers, anemones or the like, which floated and swam about on the surface of the water like breathing creatures. In the pale light of the cave they looked brilliant, and gave the place an enchantment, that otherwise it would never have enjoyed. About him on all sides was the wondrous art-work of the ocean,—strange evidences of mind mingled with the massive stolidity of the granite. There were pillars or pilasters of stone, like those which the reader has already found in the subterranean cavern mentioned elsewhere in the narrative, formed here and there; now an arch, then a wall, and more generally places rough and bare and untouched by the hand of natural genius. He could see to walk about, so he explored the huge cavern. Nothing was more impressive for Van Dyck to look upon, than that wild architecture about him. It drew him impulsively about the cavern, and its fascinations drove from his mind all sense of fear or thought for his danger.

He had begun to search about for fish, shell-fish, crabs, anything having life and flesh, that he might not starve here in this lonely and barren world. He noticed many curious *formations made among the rocks and around the sides of*

the cavern, which the snarling waters had probably at some time licked into place. A hollow silence brooded over all things here, and when he had withdrawn his eyes from the architecture around him, his mind came back to him, and suddenly fixed itself upon the imminent danger that threatened him. A mysterious spirit seemed to fill the whole great organism, and the silence which he felt was terrible to endure.

He needed food; he needed fuel. He must find both. He walked around the sides of the cavern. He had reached the end. In front of him a door opened into a cell in the wall. He entered it and found himself again in darkness. He walked on a short distance. He grew timid of the darkness and the silence, and tried to return. He must find his way back to light. He had found food in the cavern and he must return. He could not find the door; it had been closed against him. He was horrified! His heart beat loudly, so that he could hear its tremendous throbbings and at times feel its weight in his bosom. How long that heart would continue to beat he knew not, for unless rescued from this place he would surely perish and become food for the living creatures that dwelt here beneath the sea. He had imagined himself in a narrow corridor from which he could easily find his way back with the aid of the light which would stream in through the orifice from the cave, but when he looked back and saw nothing of the light, he became confused and instead of retracing his steps he had walked directly away from it. He put out his hands once to find the side of the passage, but he felt nothing. All was a huge vacuum. Again he cried out for help, but his own voice alone returned to him, as it beat against the walls of the cave beyond and retraced its course, like one, who, realizing the fact that he can proceed no further on his journey, returns to the place from which he started. So came back his voice in the form of an echo.

Poor Van Dyck was almost frantic, and he pushed on through the darkness of the cavity, like one impelled by some force, which they can feel but cannot see. He knew

not where he was going, yet he must go somewhere, even though it be unto a worse habitation, since to remain here would be only suffering, starvation and death. He could not return, so he pushed on, on, on. Would the place never end? It had seemed to him that there was no termination of this endless labyrinth into which he had so unfortunately entered. Who could tell the beginning or the end?

"Oh, this race for stolid gold!" he thought. "How insignificant are such purposes compared to the brave and stubborn race for human life."

He could not tell whether he was following a direct course, or a circuitous one. He had no compass, no light, no guide save heaven, so that he could not make any definite, or certain calculations concerning the route he was travelling. Perhaps the course was a straight one; though more probable it was confusingly winding. He could contemplate now the full power of the sea, and the mighty works of old ocean. She had built deep excavations in the bottom of the sea, pierced even the granite, worn away the hard rock, and built wonderful and strange abodes, uninhabited, unseen by mortal eyes, and unvisited by worldly people. What work of submarine art has not old ocean performed?

"She rummages, dismembers, bores, perforates, and grooves; she fills the rocks with cells, and makes it sponge-like; hollows out the inside, or sculptures it without."

What endless roads under the sea, or under the earth may she not have constructed at her leisure during the past few ages? What an innumerable amount of caves, tunnels, passages, sanctuaries, and palaces, she may not have fashioned in her restless motion? Where might the end of this passage be?

While he meditated, he thought he caught the faint sound of human voices, coming from out among the rocks and the blinding darkness. He stopped and listened. Yes; he heard it again. There were voices of men engaged in conversation. He started forward, but suddenly his body brought *up against the solid rock*. He listened again, and still heard *the voices*. He called out for help, but got no reply. He

felt his way along the sides of the cavern until he came to a deep crevice in the granite wall. A sort of light was streaming into the place from the outside. It was like the light that shines from a wood fire, or a torch. The voices were more audible than before; and every once in awhile he could hear what the men were saying. He put his head down close to the wall and peered through the open crack. He could see into what appeared to be another cave, and the interior seemed to be lighted by fires or torches, he could not tell which. When he looked he beheld a beautiful female, clad in all the elegance of submarine fashion. Upon her head was a wreath, made from the flowers and weeds such as he had seen in the cave from which he had just come. Her dress was of some light fabric, which waved and flowed in the gentle air that stirred in the cave, like silk; and was most artistically embroidered in beautiful designs with some kind of sea-plant, fibrous, and running like the evergreen, or the trailing arbutus; which were also inextricably intertwined around the bottom of her skirts, which hung fringe-like, giving her attire a simple though brilliant decoration. Around her slender shoulders she wore a curiously woven mantle, and in her hand she carried a torch. From this torch came the light through the crevice in front of which Van Dyck was standing. Once he heard her speak. She was talking to the men in a soft, melodious voice, sweet and persuasive.

"And here my good men may you dwell as peacefully and contented as I have lived through these years of my heavenly existence. You must now discard all thoughts for that wicked world from which you have been wafted, and live only for the kingdom which you have now entered. Your comrade approaches,—I must away. Beyond is a beautiful country."

The light which had given Van Dyck hope, quickly disappeared and he heard one of the men say: "Larkin is coming. The girl will not remain with us."

"Is she not lovely?" asked one.

"And as sweet as an angel," promptly put in the second.

Van Dyck was in a tantalizing situation. He was within a short distance of his companions, yet he could not get to them. He would speak to them, though he had but little hope of being heard. He put his mouth down to the opening, and shouted. It was the master vocal effort of his life. "Larkin!" he shouted, "I say,—Larkin!"

He heard the men muttering among themselves. Again he cried out to them through the crack in the rock. He had hunted diligently for an opening in the cave, but had failed. There was a granite partition, separating him from his companions. It was only a few feet thick, yet it might have been just the same to Van Dyck had it been several miles. He could not make them hear him, though he could hear them walking about on the rocks, and he knew that they were preparing to leave. If he could only make Larkin hear him! The thought of being left alone here frightened him, and again he yelled frantically through the crack.

"A wondrous science of dynamics, exhibits here its problem really solved."

Huge, ponderous rocks hung in masses overhead, but fell not. Van Dyck thought, yea, he had hoped in this hour of suspense, that these rocky giants might fall on him and crush him to death, for to die suddenly, is better than to pine away by hunger and thirst, and to meet at last the horrors of the grave from which there is no escape.

"Hark!" he heard Larkin say, and then he knew that he had at last been heard, and would be saved.

"Did you not hear someone's voice calling to us?" he asked.

Again Van Dyck cried out: "Larkin!"

"Halloo!" returned the other.

At last he had made himself heard.

"Save me!" Van Dyck shouted.

"Where are you, and who are you?"

"On the other side of this cliff. It is Van Dyck."

"Can you not come round?"

"No: Come to the mouth of the deepest crack and I will peak to you."

Larkin did as told, and spoke to the prisoner inside, walled in by thick, granite bars and bolted doors.

"Is there no way left for you?" shouted Larkin.

"None," replied Van Dyck in despair.

"Where is Mattocks and the men?" asked Larkin.

"I don't know. Have you not seen them?"

"No."

"Who are those men with you?" Van Dyck asked.

"Sailors from boat No. 3."

"You must help me from this place, for I have no food and will starve."

"I will try to find an opening into your cave," said Larkin.

"Hang on as long as possible, for I will not leave you there to perish."

Even the thought that he had made himself heard was a source of extreme comfort to Van Dyck, whose heart had well-nigh famished for the want of hope of some kind to feed upon. He could now endure the pangs of his cruel situation with a firm heart, and a bold sense of endurance,—that fortitude and perseverance which often have united in effecting the world's greatest achievements.

Larkin had sought eagerly for some way of escape for Van Dyck, but had failed to find an available passage communicating with the cave in which his friend was imprisoned. He had returned and told Van Dyck of his failure, but it did not dishearten the latter. Van Dyck had endured much already, and had now become a desperate man. To remain here meant death;—why, then, not sacrifice his life in trying to save it? If he should sit down in despair and pine away and starve, such a death would be ignominious in the extreme. He could not die so basely as that. He would fight gallantly for his life.

Van Dyck, as the reader already knows, had been a timid young man in meeting danger in the upper world. He had been faint-hearted and superstitious. All these weaknesses had now vanished. His heart had become hardened, and so *had his whole nature*. He would strive for and suffer most *anything* for the possession of wealth; but for his own *is*



he would sacrifice all. No gold could baffle him in his undertaking to save himself. For existence he would resort to any means whatever.

Man, it is true, loves riches; some men idolize and worship gold. True it is, however, that all men love life far better than wealth, and when the grave seems to be opening before them, and the frightful image of death appears to darken the brightness of their worldly vision, then does all thought for sordid riches give way to that stronger love and passion for human existence.

Van Dyck pulled off his coat and went to work like a determined man. Only a few feet of rock stood between him and human life. Through this granite, as the reader has been told, was a small aperture, or crack, so that he could see into the other cave, in which were his companions. The men were trying to find a place of escape for him from his prison, while Van Dyck himself went persistently at work. Had all the wealth of Captain Kidd been on the other side of the rock, and had he known the fact, Van Dyck would not have worked one-half so hard to gain its possession, as he did to force his way into the other cave, where awaited him, friends, food and life.

He scrutinized and carefully examined every hole, every opening, every crack in the rock, to see if possible whether any way could be afforded him artificially to clear a way through the granite partition. Yes, there was an opening at the base extending downward through loose rocks, and mud about the size of his arm, but how far it extended he could not tell. It took a subterranean course, and he feared its value to him in his present requirements. Nevertheless, he would dig into it, and learn its true course.

With his hands he threw up the rocks, and dug up the mud, and with his feet he kicked down the sides and enlarged the hole. He was making good progress, and there were evidences visible that the little tunnel led down under the partition into the cave beyond. It was a ray of hope. *He was now more persistent than ever, and more encouraged. He would ferret his way out to the light, or perish in*

the attempt. A half hour later, and he had made his excavation under the granite wall; and now had only a few feet more to go before he would be able to break the earth on the other side. Then he would emerge into the cave beyond and embrace his companions. How happy would be that moment, when surrounded by friends he could again exclaim, "I am safe!"

But at this stage of his proceedings his purpose was suddenly baffled, his undertaking thwarted, and that, too, even when he had already begun to feel the influence of victory. The opening took a downward course. He tried to force a way through the top, but above his head was only solid rock, through which only steel could penetrate. He was faint with fatigue and hunger, so that he could work no longer. He tried to think, but his head was dizzy, and his brain reeled. He must give up the fight. He had fought a duel with nature, and had been fairly beaten. All his efforts seemed to tend to the impossible. He must give up and die.

He hurled himself from the excavation which his efforts had dug for him, and like a man who feels that all the world is opposed to him, he threw himself in despair and terror, upon the rocks.

But even in this moment of his great uncertainty he heard a voice whisper to him from out the darkness, saying: "Bear up and take courage! Thou shalt yet be saved."

## CHAPTER XII.

"How these vain, weak nails may tear a passage through the flinty ribs of this hard world, my ragged prison wall."

"Therefore doth heaven divide the stage of man in divers functions, setting endeavor in continual motion."

It was like the voice of God, speaking to him from the darkness. Van Dyck arose and looked about him. He could see nothing but the brazen walls of the partition before him. Little by little he was losing his vitality. His feverish thirst tormented him, while hunger was slowly destroying

the organs of his body. But his courage had not altogether forsaken him. He must either succeed in making a way of escape from this prison, or die. There was no choice but one, no alternative save to confine his energies to the work which he had already begun.

He crawled back into the hole that his nails and feet had dug a few minutes before, and renewed his work. His brief rest had revived his strength, and renewed his courage to push forward with his work. But to undermine a way into the cave beyond, he found it impossible; and after cruel exhaustion had once more seized him, body and soul, he gave up the task for the second time which he had undertaken.

There is always a time in man's eventful life when the mind, slipping its moorings, drifts from its proper sphere of action with the numerous currents and under-currents which beset it, unless checked by the eddy of stronger reason, into dangers which are too apt to prove fatal. By yielding suddenly to the tide of circumstances which often surround him at certain stages of his career, man is often swept away from his best purpose, and is made to surrender himself up to that darkness in which there is to come to him no relief.

Again Van Dyck realized his folly in giving up in despair, and went to the crevice and peered through. This time he saw nothing beyond. There was no light visible in the cave as before.

Evidently his friends had given him up as wholly lost, and departed. He felt helpless at this moment, and he shouted despairingly through the wall to Larkin and his companions. But there was no reply. He was about to fall by exhaustion from the side of the cavern, where he had a moment before climbed, into the rocks below, when a light, pale, yet luminous, flashed across the wall, and then it came again and hung there for several seconds. It did not startle him but he stood there gazing at the bold, damp granite before him like *one suddenly entranced by the appearance of some strange magnificence whose sight his mind has not yet anticipated. He did not look around to see whence the light came.* He

cared naught concerning its origin. His mind had become strangely transfixed upon the things which he saw before him. The peculiar formation of the granite wall, which composed the partition between the two caverns, attracted him, for in its structure he saw hope, he saw courage, he saw, as he thought, reflected there upon the granite, a possibility of his saving his own life, dearer to him than all things else.

That possibility might have been only small, yet in this great hour of his need, it grew larger and larger until it seemed to become magnified in his own mind, and to swell out and expand into a shape of almost unimaginable magnitude. He had made a discovery.

Of all the brilliant discoveries of mind since the world began, none to him, at least, equaled in greatness or importance, that which he himself had made. None have so startled or thrilled the world suddenly, as did his discovery startle and thrill his world, for in his present situation he himself composed a world that was all his own. He saw its importance in the passing of a moment. He had no time to waste in arguing or denying its value. To him it was all-important, and he knew it. Again the mysterious light flashed across the dark sides of the cavern where he stood, and then it was that he had thought to seek its cause. To do this was easy.

He turned his head, and saw standing on a high rock behind him, holding in her dainty hand a large, red, luminous torch, the very girl whom he had seen in the adjoining cave only a few minutes before. By her peculiar dress he recognized her. She was most lovely in her appearance, and her beautiful face wore a sweet winning smile of peaceful contentment.

Van Dyck thought her extremely pretty, and her wardrobe, though peculiarly made from submarine fabrics of the finest and most delicate texture, ingeniously interwoven, yet her garments were such as could only be pronounced beautiful anywhere. It gave her figure, which was quite petite, a beauty that is unsurpassed even by the loveliest of women. Naturally the girl was pretty, and Van Dyck thought her

dress made her still more beautiful to behold. She was in all respects a lovely woman.

Her sweet presence thrilled him. He had become almost joyful, notwithstanding his excessive weariness and exhaustion, in the hope and expectancy of the moment of gaining such a charming companion in this lonely world under the world.

He extended his hands impulsively toward her, and was about to speak to her, when as quickly as the mists, which rise from off the steaming waters, become suddenly invisible in the bright sunlight of the morning, the girl, who had been standing only a short distance away, waved her lily-white hand and with a smile vanished in the darkness of the cave.

At first Van Dyck was prompted to follow her, but quickly retracted his purpose, and once more turned his attention to the granite wall before him. He had failed twice in his endeavors to pierce a way through the partition, yet he would again summon his forces to his assistance and keep on trying until the last spark of life had fled from his body. He was all pluck now.

"All honor should be given to those who bear failures bravely,  
And rise up from them with energy for fresh endeavors."

The discovery which Van Dyck had made, turned out to be of two-fold nature.

When the strange light had flashed upon the wall the first time, his eye caught sight of what appeared to be a deep seam, running perpendicularly from the base of the partition to the huge, massive rocks which heavily embossed the ceiling of the cave. It attracted his attention, and when he looked at it again, the crack appeared still larger, and more open than before.

Van Dyck felt his way along the wall, and examined the place.

It was here that part of the wall seemed to jut outward from the main partition, forming a sharp projection, which *to the eye seemed to lap over the rocks beyond it in such a*

way as to be a part of it, composing one solid wall. The partition, however, was made up of sections. It was, indeed, a wonderful freak of subterranean formation.

Van Dyck was feeling his way along with his hands resting against the wall for support, when suddenly he fell or half-staggered forward, his body bringing up forcibly against the inner wall. His shock surprised, though it did not injure him.

He was now at the entrance of a large groove running parallel with the partition, thus cutting the wall in twain.

The passage-way thus formed was narrow, but how long he could not tell. He entered the place and groped his way along in the darkness with the assured confidence in his heart of meeting Larkin in the next cave.

He could move forward only slowly. The darkness was blinding and he either felt or seemed to feel now the presence of some great uncertainty constantly about him. The rocks under his feet over which he was obliged to walk were sharp, and dangerously lubricous, so that he could not hasten his footsteps as he most desired, but was compelled to feel out his way slowly by means of the walls which hemmed him in on either side.

As he proceeded he found a more substantial footing, and he walked on a little faster.

He could not tell in which direction he was travelling, but felt confident that the passage must ultimately take him into the adjoining cave. He had now begun to walk at a rapid gait, when quite unexpectedly he stepped from the stony path under his feet, and fell forward into the darkness before him.

He got up and looked around him. He could see nothing.

Van Dyck put his left foot carefully forward, clinging to the wall with his hands. He could feel nothing in front of him, and he quickly withdrew his foot from the bottomless pit. He pulled a piece of the loose rock from the side of the wall and cast it into the hole. Almost simultaneously with his casting the stone, a sound like that produced by

throwing a fragment of stone against an iron boiler or vessel, returned to his ear. It was a hollow sound that came from the pit.

The place was evidently not very deep, so by clinging to the rocks with his hands he lowered himself downward until his feet rested on the hard clay below. He was in a small excavation, lying treacherously between the two *termini* of the stony pathway over which he had been travelling. The little cavity into which he had climbed measured about fifteen feet across it, and was circular in form, and looked as though it had been made by means of blasting the rock out of the passage-way.

It did not look like the work of nature, but must have been caused by artificial means.

The clayey substance beneath his feet seemed perfectly dry, and Van Dyck got down upon his hands and knees, and began to feel around.

Thus far in his rambles through the place he had seen no clay or earth of any kind. The bottom of the passage had been all the way composed of rocks, and it was only now and then that earth of any description was visible on the sides of the two walls.

This mud or clay that Van Dyck had discovered under his feet had been placed there, and arranged by human hands. He had surmised all this at first, but now that he investigated the place thoroughly he was convinced of it. He had a few matches left, and he took one from his pocket and lighted it. The little torch illuminated for a moment the entire cavity.

Van Dyck hurriedly cast his eyes about the place, and saw there upon the mud the foot-prints of a man. There could be no mistake, for now he had lighted another match, and was looking at the tracks. This time Van Dyck caught the sight of some rusty looking object,—like an iron vessel—*exposed just above the clay.* He went along to where *the object lay, and kicked it with his foot.* He picked it *up, and found that the iron pot was empty.* He lighted *another match, and found a few feet away a second pot.* He

tried to raise this one from the mud, but could not, though he exerted every muscle of his body. He tried to turn it over, and even in that purpose he failed. It was evidently an iron pot, filled with some heavy metal, perhaps gold. Van Dyck suspected that it was one of the pots, containing Captain Kidd's gold, and felt highly elated at his find.

His dangerous position, his fatigue, his hunger, his thirst, his eagerness to find a way of escape from his prison, all left him for the moment, in his greed for the gold, which had instantaneously seized his mind.

But physically he was not equal to the task of raising the iron pot from its resting-place, and in his failure to accomplish his desired work, his exhaustion again overpowered him, and turned his mind from the prize, which he was so eager to capture.

"This is indeed, an unlucky find," thought Van Dyck. "Many men no doubt would call such a discovery fortune—luck. But of what value is all this gold to me, if it be gold, here in this subterranean prison from which there is no escape? I cannot so much as pry the cover off, that I may look at it even. I will find Larkin, and then return for the gold."

Gold in such a place was only an aggravation to him. He could not use it; he could not even remove it from the place where it had been so cunningly concealed. He had stumbled upon it only by accident, but he had after all made a fortune only to lose it.

If he could only find Larkin, he thought, for then both of them with the assistance of the sailors with him would be able to transport the gold into the neighboring cave.

But to find Larkin seemed more difficult than to carry away the gold. Van Dyck went to the place where the passage continued, and looked in. He saw only darkness such as his eyes were now accustomed to see. He had made up his mind to find Larkin, if possible; and he again entered the dark labyrinth before him, and began his journey forward, feeling his way slowly along by means of the wall. With his feet Van Dyck felt out his way, and often stopped a moment to consider his situation.



He had not proceeded very far, when his ear caught a sound like someone breathing. Some person or creature was in his presence. He paused to listen, and at that moment a strong hand seized him by the throat, and held him firmly.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"Do not you fear: upon mine honor I  
Will stand betwixt you and danger."

THE grip, which some unseen hand had fastened upon his throat, grew stronger and tighter, until Van Dyck felt that he was being choked to death. He could see nothing, but there seemed to be about him the motion of some living creature. He was as powerless as if he had been held in a vice. He could not move, and what to him was even worse, he could not breathe. Poor Van Dyck! Some hidden power had grasped him by the throat, and was choking him. He was already faint and exhausted, so that he could make but little or no effort to relieve himself from the iron hand which held him. He could not get his breath, and the hand relaxed not its grip.

Van Dyck became insensible.

How long he remained in this perilous condition he knew not. When he again opened his eyes, he saw the form of a beautiful female bending over him. Her torch was burning brilliantly, so that he could easily perceive the things about him.

Van Dyck was still in the passage-way, hemmed in on all sides by granite walls. The girl was tenderly stooping over him, when he awoke, and her smile was gentle, loving, —womanly.

"You are not quite dead?" she inquired in a sweet voice.

*Then she continued in a gentle way: "I feared lest you might never again return to your friends."*

*"My friends! oh! Larkin? Where is he?" stammered Van Dyck, looking eagerly about.*

"Do not fear, sir," she said with much compassion in her sweet voice, "I will conduct you safely to your companions."

Van Dyck was aroused. He was so happy in the thought of being rescued, that he quite forgot his great bodily infirmity. He was fatigued, worn out by cruel exhaustion, yet in the tender voice of this fair girl he realized hope, and quickly answered, when she had asked him if he was able to follow her: "Yes, I am able to walk."

He tried to raise himself up; but, alas! he could not move.

The girl smiled, as if ridiculing him for having attempted to rise under the pressure of his weary body.

"You are yet weak," she said tenderly.

"What monster has done this?" asked Van Dyck anxiously. He was thinking of the hand that had nearly choked him to death.

The girl laughed musically.

"It was the cruel hand of Saga. His arms are like iron, though you see them not, and his body lies hidden beneath these granite walls."

"And who might this Saga be?" Van Dyck asked.

"Many years ago," began the girl, "long before you and I were born——"

"And who are you, girl? You have not told me yet," he interrupted.

"Wait until I have finished!" commanded the girl, as if chiding him for his interruption. "I was telling you," she added, "that many years ago a crew of wicked sailors,—bold and heartless pirates—by some unknown accident came into this cave under the sea, and buried their plunder only a few feet away. It was their intention to come back after the gold within a short time, but sweet fortune never smiled upon them again. It was decided by them, that one of their number should act as sentinel, and guard the gold until the others should return. They drew lots, and the die being cast, fell upon Saga. He was a most faithful sailor and guarded the plunder for years. Not once did he leave it, *but constantly* hoped and looked for his companions, who *never* returned."

He passed life's limit, but even then he did not desert his post. His body became petrified with the stone, and his arms became like iron. He was transformed into a giant, firm as the rock and as constant as the granite walls themselves. He still guards the gold with his magic strength."

After she had finished speaking Van Dyck who had been intently listening, asked: "And would he have killed me?"

"Had I not come to your rescue he would have held you in his grasp forever," promptly answered the girl.

"And the gold?" Van Dyck inquired.

"He will allow none to carry it away," replied the other.

"How do you control this giant?" asked Van Dyck.

"Saga and myself are enemies. He fears me, and never remains in my presence,"

"And tell me your name, pray?"

"Arise, sir!" commanded the girl.

Van Dyck stood upon his feet. He felt strong again.

"Follow me!" said the girl, taking her torch, and leading the way through the passage.

Van Dyck followed her.

Once the young lady stopped, and passing him a small flask containing some kind of liquor, said: "Drink!" When Van Dyck had tasted of the liquor, his thirst was suddenly quenched, his hunger vanished, and all weariness of body and mind left him.

His strength was renewed.

The girl walked on in silence, and Van Dyck followed her without speaking a word, but he surveyed his gentle companion, and greatly wondered. Who could she be? Where did she come from? What could be her mission here?

All these questions Van Dyck had to consider.

Before they had gone very far, a thought occurred to Van Dyck, which in his great surprise and wonder, his mind had overlooked.

*If this lady—whoever she might be—could so baffle the projects of this giant, Saga, why could not she be able to seize the gold, and take it away without the giant's resistance. He began to consider the matter seriously. Why*

not, he thought, suggest some idea for getting possession of the gold to this beautiful goddess?

If he could only induce her to join his company, or form any sort of an alliance with him, how easily could he win the prize. Then the objects of the expedition would be fully achieved. And the girl herself, was she not very beautiful? Would she not make him a most desirable companion in this submarine world?

Perhaps he might fall in love with her and take her for his wife. They were alone here, and they could talk over their plans without fear of being heard by mortal ears. At last his thoughts got the best of him, and he felt obliged to speak to her.

"And did you say that Saga was your enemy?" he asked.

"Always," promptly answered the girl.

"But you have not told me your name," said Van Dyck.

"Oh, no. I shall never do that," said she playfully.

"Why?"

"Do not ask me!" she implored.

"No?"

"I cannot tell you," she said with a pleasant smile.

"Saga fears you, does he not?" Van Dyck asked shrewdly.

"Yes."

"Why can you not aid me, then?" he asked.

"How?"

"In obtaining the gold."

The girl's face assumed a doubtful expression. His words evidently annoyed her, and she replied firmly:

"Ah, foolish man. Do not think of the gold that thou hast seen."

"Why not?" cried Van Dyck.

"You can never obtain it. Do not hope."

"But with your aid——" he interrupted.

"I have no power over the work of Satan. I am here in this lonely world doing good in whatever way I can. My mission is to guard the right. Saga's work is different. He fears me as the evil fears the good,——the wicked, righteous."

"I understand," said Van Dyck, when she had finished speaking.

"It is better that you do," she returned with a smile, which elsewhere than in this cold, damp world beneath the earth, might have been considered extremely coquettish.

They had now come into a small cave exceedingly beautiful with its stalactites and stalagmites; and sparkling crystals studded the walls and ceiling. Winding dizzily among the stalagmites were narrow paths, or walks leading to different parts of the cave. Near the center of this palatial cavern—the home of this beautiful goddess—was curiously fashioned by means of the stalactites and stalagmites, an altar with its canopy towering above, which had been erected, no doubt, by subterranean forces, and perhaps dedicated to Hymen—the god of marriage.

The girl led Van Dyck along these walks in silence, and when they had arrived before the altar, she fell upon her knees and wept.

Van Dyck was amazed. Her strange conduct surprised him, and her tears affected him deeply, for they came from her heart. These tears were pure like those shed by the chaste Diana.

The girl arose, and without taking any notice of her companion she walked with bowed head into the altar. Van Dyck did not molest her, but kept silent and watched her with wonder. She did not turn toward him; she did not smile, she did not speak. Her face was turned partly away from him, while her eyes were transfixed upon some imaginary object before her. Finally she stood perfectly still. Her right hand was extended, her hair hung loosely over her queenly shoulders, and her lips occasionally quivered with emotion and opened at times as if she was repeating some line or verse to herself. Not until she had gone through these several motions did it occur to Van Dyck that the girl *perhaps was rehearsing the marriage ceremony*. He did not *understand her*. How beautiful she looked! Again she *knelt down*, and then retraced her steps from the altar. *Approaching Van Dyck* she took him by the hand without

uttering a word and led him away into another part of the cave. Her hand was cold.

"What place is this?" asked Van Dyck when they had halted.

Formed in the rock near by was a small seat, and she bade her guest sit down beside her.

"And why do you ask?" she returned.

"Because I am curious to learn your secret," Van Dyck replied shrewdly.

The girl laughed sweetly and said: "I am quite aware of that fact."

"Tell me who you are!" cried Van Dyck.

"I cannot do it now. Sometime you will learn," said the girl gravely.

"And can you not tell me how you came here, and why you remain?" asked Van Dyck eagerly. "Tell me why you have rehearsed the marriage ceremony in yonder altar."

The strange girl did not reply, but sat demurely silent for several moments.

"You are asking too much of me," she firmly replied.

"And are you not lonely here?" he asked, viewing her with admiration.

"Oh, no; I am never lonesome. And now you see I have an excellent companion," she answered strangely.

"And can I be your companion forever?"

Van Dyck became suddenly serious. This beautiful girl whom he had so mysteriously met, he admired. Something like love had stolen into his heart, and he was burning with a passionate desire to take his lovely companion in his embrace, and whisper to her words of love.

"And may I dwell here with you?" he continued.

The girl shook her head.

Van Dyck held his arms toward her, and his eyes pleaded the cause of his heart. The love which came to him was sudden; it was unnatural, yet like all love it overpowered him completely. He spoke to her again, and his words came with a sudden outburst of passion.

"But I love you," he cried; and Van Dyck would have caught the girl in his arms and embraced her passionately.

had not she mechanically waved him off. She arose from the seat, and began to reprimand him for his foolish conduct, though her words did not cut nor sting him.

"Do not be like foolish men," she said. "Why not be strong, and not give way so easily to passion? Are we not alone? Do not speak of love in such a place. Take my words kindly, but I must tell you that I have no love for you."

"Then you love another?" cried Van Dyck, with a feeling of jealousy in his heart.

"No; my love is buried in yonder altar," answered the girl, while Van Dyck noticed tears in her beautiful eyes.

"Sit down!" said Van Dyck with a tone of pity in his voice. "I take it that you have been crossed in love, or perhaps your lover is dead."

"I loved him, yes, I loved him dearly," sobbed the girl.

"Who?" asked Van Dyck springing to his feet.

"Ask me not!" pleaded the girl.

"And why are you so strange? Why can you not tell me something of your early life?" he persisted.

Passion had been supplanted by pity for the girl amid her deep sorrow. She was a mysterious being, though charming and beautiful. Van Dyck had been completely intoxicated by her sweet presence. To sit beside her, and to catch her words, and to drink in her sweet breath, was all joy and ecstasy for him.

"My life," said the girl, "is a thing of the past. In my hour of earthly bliss and happiness I was cruelly,—ah, though rightly—cut off from all bliss, and from all worldly happiness. Here I am made to dwell a life of single contentment. My only happiness here is my privilege of entering yonder altar, where I daily worship the sweet remembrance of him in whose great love I was at one time at rest, by kneeling down there, as I had hoped to do with him in life. But alas! I was cut off from worldly privileges, enjoyed by so many, perhaps less deserving than myself. *God, however, knows best what blessings his children should share. I humbly resign myself to his care and protection.*"

"To whom do you refer? tell me, who was your lover?" urged Van Dyck.

"No, no, no," said she hurriedly, yet decidedly. "Do not ask me again," she continued, rising from her seat, and walking a short distance away from her would-be lover.

Van Dyck sat ruminating. Was she not even more than any of her sex a mystery? Nevertheless this girl was his ideal woman. She was noble, brave and true. There was nothing of human selfishness in her nature. She could sacrifice all for the love she bore him, whom in life she had sworn to love. There were no evidences of disloyalty on the surface of her character, that Van Dyck was able to see; no idle perceptions of true womanhood. Could she be mortal? He loved her even now and could love such a noble creature forever. But she cared naught for his love. His heart was as cold in her mind as the granite sides of the cave. Her nature had no warmth in it for him. She had loved but once, it was with an everlasting love, however, such as clings to the heart through all eternity.

Van Dyck could by no means thrust his love upon her. An irresistible fascination had seized upon him. His heart was on fire, yet it must be left to cool away, and his love vanish. The girl would not listen to him. Her ears were sealed against his appeals. Van Dyck lingered here in his misery for some time. Misery? yes, it was indeed torture for him to remain in the presence of the girl whom he loved, and yet not be allowed to converse with her as he would liked to have done. The girl began to speak concerning other things, and would not consent to listen to him whenever he began to tell her how he loved, admired and adored her. In this respect she was cruel. Again Van Dyck felt that he had found, but could not capture the prize he sought.

The couple had now passed from this cave, through a broad passage-way, and were standing at the entrance of another cavern in which dwelt nothing save eternal darkness. The girl had halted, and had given Van Dyck her torch. Then she spoke: "Take this light! it will guide you unto your friends and into a beautiful country."



"But you are not going to leave me?" he gasped.

"This is the cave you have been seeking," she replied.

"At the other end you will find your friends. I must leave you now."

Van Dyck felt timid. He dreaded the darkness. To sever his connections with his beautiful companion was a thing hard to do. In her presence he felt safe, but to wander alone in the cave,—his heart rebelled.

"I know of what you are musing," she said; "but do not think of me again. I will protect you from all danger."

After she had spoken thus, she disappeared and Van Dyck looked for her in vain. He called to her, but got no reply. He was disappointed, and felt that he had loved in vain. Could she be so cruel as to leave him with no kind word of adieu? She was gone. He again was alone, and in darkness, but she had left him not without a light by which he could find his way about the dark cavern. For this much, at least, he could feel thankful for having met her. Many men have fared worse, he thought, when having poured out their deepest affections upon fickle women, they have received nothing friendly in return.

"Woe, alas! to the man, who has only loved bodies, shapes, and appearances."

These lines Van Dyck repeated in his mind, and then passed along the rough sides of the cavern.

## CHAPTER XIV.

"So shaken as we are, so wan with care,  
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant,  
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils  
To be commenced in strands afar remote."

ON the opposite side of the great hollow cavern, issuing from among huge, mangled ledges, which some powerful eruption had broken off from the solid crust, and thrown together promiscuously, came a ray, then a flash of light that warmed the heart of Van Dyck even as it wended its

hurried course across the cave, like the wearied heart of the sailor is gladdened from the light of the beacon when among the dangers of sea and fog. Here he found his friends, Larkin, and the sailors from boat No. 3.

As the reader can well imagine, the meeting was a joyful one. Larkin and his companions had been trying to find some way of escape for Van Dyck from the cave in which he had become incarcerated, but having failed to make the proper discovery, they had one and all, given him up as lost; and around their bright wood fire which they had kindled among the rocks, they were sitting in demure silence when Van Dyck had quite unceremoniously thrown himself into their presence. Once more with his companions he was safe. Already the darkness which resided continually in the bosom of the cavern became twilight to him, here with his friends, which eventually had changed into a luminous light, like that of day in the outside world.

Surrounded by warm friends the world becomes bright to the heart, even in the thick gloom and darkness of night. But deserted by all friendship, how black is day!

Prior to Van Dyck's arrival at the home of Vanderdonk, he had wandered from cave to cave, with Larkin and the sailors, having made numerous startling discoveries, and passing through many wild and strange adventures.

The girl he had not seen since she had left him in the cavern where he had found his friends. Van Dyck had thought of her much, and was more than puzzled about her strange and marvelous existence. Her name he knew not. She had refused to tell him. Nor could he explain in his mind how she came there, or from what place. He thought her very beautiful, yea, charming. In his eye she looked the ideal woman, and he carried her image constantly in his heart.

But why, he had thought, was she spending a life of such solitude? Why had she made up her mind to waste away here in her frosty palace under the sea, worshipping forms, imaginary idols, ghosts and phantasms?

Van Dyck could explain none of these things. He had roamed about with his companions guided by heaven and

until he had discovered a passage leading into Crystal Cave, thence into Fire Cave, so-called, on account of the everlasting fires which burned there, and from thence into the verdant cave, which our host Vanderdonk had told us was the valley of Immortal Life. Could we dispute him?

Nelson and myself had listened most attentively to the story of Van Dyck, nor did we find occasion to interrupt him with our interrogatories while he was speaking, though his strange and unnatural adventures had startled and surprised us. But after all, were they any more unnatural than our adventures? Our experience had been quite similar to his own, since our arrival in the underground world.

Nelson got quite enthusiastic over the pot of gold which Van Dyck said he had discovered, but which treasure he had been unable to purloin on account of the resistance of Saga, the giant; while I became more especially interested in that part of the story which related to the girl.

No more than my friend could I explain the mystery of her life in this cold, damp world where she was so contentedly—seemingly—wearing out a perpetual subterranean existence. How came she here? From where? Who was she? But, after all, were not there as equally mysterious things existing continually about us? Who was Vanderdonk? Might there not be inhabitants under the earth? *Qui sait?*

Fire Cave,—was it a volcano? Certainly it was a strange place. And the valley—what man could tell why all these trees, this dense foliage, green shrubbery, and these beautiful sparkling waters, were allowed by nature each to retain its former appearance and worldly beauty? Was not Vanderdonk a wonder, too? Yes, greater than all the wonders which I have previously named. From what place did he come?

Did he come with Captain Kidd?

Was he really immortal?

*Did he draw his life from worldly sources?*

*Was he drinking from the fountain of eternal life?*

*Was he really a thousand years old?*

Could he be Methuselah in disguise?

If this man could live a thousand years, or two hundred years, why could not the girl? Why could not we also?

Who was Saga?

Who was the girl?

Could she be Kate Reddington, my own lost Kate?

Impossible.

Never can the sea give up its dead in such marvelous, and incarnate shapes.

"O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?  
Where hath it slept?"

It was absurd for me to think of meeting Kate in any of these caverns, yet I was foolish enough to entertain the notion that the strange allusion, which Vanderdonk had made to a girl, whose birth and death alike must have been unknown to him, through worldly intelligence, might hold some relationship after all, with the story of Van Dyck.

I did not dare to reveal my thoughts to my friends for fear they might laugh at my weakness, and chide me for my folly and superstition. I kept the matter secretly locked in my heart, but with a firm determination that if ever an opportunity should offer itself—should I be allowed the privilege of leaving this beautiful cavern into which we had entered—that I would make a search for the girl, and ferret out the secret of her existence. The mystery had completely over-shadowed my mind.

Nelson was anxious to go back to the haunts of Saga for the gold. For its possession he would face the old giant, and measure arms with him, if necessary, even in the dark labyrinth where he dwelt.

The question was minutely discussed among ourselves. At first Van Dyck did not think it advisable to return. He recalled his former sad experience with Saga. But the hope of again seeing the girl caused him to forget, to some extent, his difficulties with the giant. Besides he would have the assistance of his friends, and his mind, strengthened by such encouragement, still craved for adventure.

Van Dyck after meditating awhile said :

"I propose a re-organization of the 'E. and L.' Mining Company, boys."

"I am heartily in favor of such a move," said I, after Van Dyck had finished.

Nelson laughed loudly and said: "I had quite forgotten about our company. If our worthy president was here to act we might call a special meeting, and adopt some measure for future action. What do you have to offer, Sanborn?"

"My idea," I replied, "is that we had better call a meeting here and form some definite plan of action, even in his absence. The vice-president can act as chairman, and president, *pro tem.*,—can he not?"

"Certainly," Nelson consented.

"Mattocks, if alive, can be rescued, and if we go back to the first cave, we may be fortunate enough to find him."

"And we can procure the gold, also," added the speculator.

"By acting together we may be able to accomplish everything," I answered hopefully.

"Have we a quorum in order to do business legally?" asked Nelson officially.

"Aye, aye, aye," we shouted in concert.

And thus in the stillness and quietude of this beautiful subterranean garden, the "E. and L." Mining Company held its second business meeting. There was no speech making, no unnecessary remarks made by any of the members present, no indulgence in fruitless or vulgar witticism. But only a due and honest consideration was given to our plans, which we intended to carry out with the aid of Providence in the future. We were in a perilous situation; lost to the world, and hemmed in by rocks and earth in caves of enormous proportions and magnitude, communicating with each other by means of subterranean passages, so intricately winding and puzzling, as to blind our grandest mental efforts, and baffle our bravest judgment. Was not the question as to how we should finally make our escape from these dark confines to *the world* whence we had departed, a serious one? Was it *not a question of great moment*, how we should find

Mattocks, make peace with Saga, capture the gold, rescue the girl, and return to our boats?

All these grave questions we discussed at some length, and made immediate preparations to leave the home of Vanderdonk. Mattocks and his companions we knew must be in a critical condition, if alive. Perhaps they were already dead, and their lifeless bodies serving as food to the hungry crustacea in some submarine grotto.

I had now gone into the hut after Scott and the sailors, but found him stretched out upon the floor with his companions fast asleep. Their bacchanalian repast had proved too much for them, and they lay there like dead men.

Vanderdonk sat in their midst, his face wreathed with smiles of satisfaction. All had been eating, drinking and smoking, until they had become completely drugged, and insensible to the things around them.

I went out and reported the status of these men to Nelson and Van Dyck. We made our preparations for the start, and again I went back to call Scott. He was still sleeping.

I became anxious, for fear the deep sleep of the men might necessitate a delay, which might be of serious import to the expedition.

Vanderdonk still sat grinning wildly near the table.

"Will these men not awaken to-day?" I asked him.

Our savage host shook his grizzly head.

"This is some more of your ugly work," I snapped, feeling irritated by his coolness, and haughty indifference.

"Will they not soon awaken?" I asked again, when he did not reply.

"Not until to-morrow. Then you and your men will be far away."

"What do you mean?"

"They will not arouse from their slumbers until to-morrow."

"But you can awake them," I demanded, "why do you not do so? I request it."

"I have no power over them," said the pirate.

"What! can you not free them from the influence of *your drug*, as you did me?" I asked in horror.

Vanderdonk smiled. There was no radiancy in that ugly smile of his, however. His features were those of Charon,—dark ferryman of the dead—and his voice sepulchral and unpropitious.

“Do you not understand?” he inquired, fixing his unnatural eyes upon me, and gazing at me earnestly.

“No,” I replied, “I do not understand you.”

“Listen!” said he, rising from his seat and approaching me. “Were not these men struck by the hand of Death from the wicked world?”

“What else?” I inquired, wondering what our host would reveal next.

“These men,” said he, pointing to the lifeless bodies outstretched upon the ferns, “were cut off from life because they had already reached the limit of their mortality. From here shall they never depart.”

“Murderer!” I cried, drawing my revolver, “your worthless life shall pay the penalty of this deed.”

“Do not kill him!” exclaimed Nelson, grasping my arm firmly.

Our host laughed loudly: “And would you kill me?” he inquired mockingly.

“I would shoot you like a dog. Arouse these men, or I will blow your brains out,” I replied with passion.

“I do not fear your bullets,” said Vanderdonk, the pirate. “Wouldst thou shoot me as you did yonder animals in the jungles? Is it thus you pay me for my hospitality?” he asked with irony in his deep, gruff voice.

“Do not mock me!” I cried, agitated by his indifference to my threats, “but arouse the men.”

“They shall never return to the world above,” replied our host, “I have not the power to give them back to you. These men, like myself, are doomed to eternal bliss here in this beautiful country. Go thy way and do not disturb us, ye wicked seekers after gold!”

There was no alternative left us, but to depart in peace from this place, and leave our companions behind. At first, *we thought it another cunning joke of Vanderdonk's*, but

finally, he became too serious in his statements for us to doubt their truth. The old pirate was right, for we could not resurrect the dead.

Nelson and myself, especially, had reasons to grieve the untimely fate of Scott, the cockswain, who had been to us a companion of much worth, faithful, brave and true; yet if the Almighty had so decreed, we must and would bear our grief bravely. Poor Scott had sailed his earthly course, he had entirely run the race of mortality, and could he have spoken to us before he took his last draught from the flagon of his generous host, he might have truly said:

“I have fought the good fight; I have kept the faith.”

We all knelt down by the side of our lost friend, and offered prayer for the safety and happiness of these unfortunate souls, while they might claim a residence in the valley of Immortal Life. When we arose Jim White wiped a few tears from his eyes and exclaimed, “amen!”

Then we all bowed our heads and left the hut.

## CHAPTER XV.

“Shall in these confines with a monarch’s voice  
Cry ‘Havoc,’ and let slip the dogs of war.”

“CAN you not find the place?” Nelson had been asking of Van Dyck.

“Can a camel pass through the eye of a needle?” rejoined the other, giving significance to the impossibilities of the hour.

Van Dyck was in the best of spirits, but not quite master of the situation.

We were now in that immense cavern, where Van Dyck had previously met Larkin and the sailors,—in that huge grotto under the sea, barricaded by thick, heavy masses of granite on all sides, and with the whole crust of the earth above for a roofing—in that cavern, whose compartments were so unaccommodating to mortals.



Our party now consisted of five persons, namely, Van Dyck, Nelson, Larkin, Jim White, and myself. Poor Scott and his companions had died a mysterious death. We had been obliged to leave them behind. Van Dyck was now serving us as guide. He thought he knew the exact location of the entrance of the passage through which he had been led by the girl, and had felt quite confident that he could "put his finger on it."

Having been fortunate in finding the cavern again, we had all hoped that we should be able to discover the opening from the cave into the palace where dwelt the girl, thence to the gold which Saga was guarding, and thence to our boats. Mattocks and his companions we should certainly find *en route* to the first cave. Our course we had all mapped out in our minds, but now we failed to find the proper connection with the cave where dwelt the girl.

Nelson had been all hope, but was now disappointed, and excited, and had said again to Van Dyck: "Did you not say that the passage was at this end of the cavern?"

Van Dyck was exceedingly cool for him.

"I did," he replied calmly.

"Why do we not find it, then?" queried Nelson, impatiently.

"Give it up," responded Van Dyck in good humor. "But boys," he continued with confidence, "I certainly did come into this cave in the manner I have already set forth to you. I hope you do not question my veracity, Nelson?"

The other smiled, and quickly said apologetically: "Of course not, Van. Please pardon my impatience! But where do you suppose the place is?"

"I am sure it is here somewhere in this vicinity," persisted Van Dyck.

All were silent, and kept up a continual search for the passage-way.

At last Nelson shouted: "Boys!"

"Well?" we all asked simultaneously.

"I have a scheme," said the speculator.

"Let's hear it!" we all cried.

We all gathered about him, and Nelson, our vice-president, began: "I propose that we all take our torches and stand up in a row near the side of the cave, in such a manner, that all our lights may be concentrated upon the wall, and then I will look for the opening."

"All right!" we exclaimed joyfully.

Each of our party was provided with a torch of some kind, and by chance I had got the very torch which the girl had given Van Dyck. It was more brilliant than any of the others.

Nelson arranged us in a line near the wall, at short intervals, so that the light of our torches fell upon it, lighting up every crack and crevice in the granite partition. Then Nelson said to us in sport: "Now, boys, you look like a torch-light procession. Such a one as I imagine will tramp down Broadway the night after Grover Cleveland is elected President, in 1892."

"No, no, no!" shouted Van Dyck with enthusiasm. "Blaine! Blaine! Hurrah for the man from Maine! Hurrah for James G. Blaine!"

"Well, what's the matter with Harrison?" I cried.

And then the whole party set up such a shouting that I dare say such applause was never heard in old Faneuil Hall. Our huzzas echoed and re-echoed across the empty cavern, until the very walls rang with the names of "Blaine,"—"Cleveland," "Harrison," and "Hill," and "the campaign of '92."

"Never was such a cry heard in Egypt."

All became confusion and noise, and our enthusiasm swelled to such a pitch, that Nelson who had commenced the fun was obliged to stop it by ordering us to keep quiet again.

"You are getting razzle-dazzled, boys," said the speculator. "Let us stop this foolishness, and look for the passage."

"Let us give one more cheer for Blaine! hip, hip—" began Van Dyck, but he was suddenly interrupted by White and Larkin, who had now begun to yell loudly together: "Hurrah, for Grover Cleveland! Hurrah for Mrs.—! Tiger!"

"That is right, boys," said I, "do not forget the ladies of our country."

"I reckon they are the bob-stays of the old ship of State," said White, the sailor.

"Yes, and the support of our Union," I added; and taking off our caps, we swung them wildly, and shouted for the ladies of America.

We had not yet found any opening from the cave. Poor, energetic, ambitious, enterprising Nelson was in the slough of despond. Van Dyck felt a little worked up over his failure to "put his finger" on the place.

"I am sure it is right here," the guide had said again.

"Wait here until I return!" said Nelson. "I am going to reconnoitre."

"Not alone?" I asked.

"Yes. I will return soon," responded the speculator.

We sat down upon the rocks and waited for Nelson to return. One minute, five minutes, fifteen minutes passed, —an hour! He did not return. Van Dyck became anxious. I was growing impatient, and trembled for the safety of Nelson, after having heard the strange story of Van Dyck concerning the denizens of this place.

"Is it not time that Nelson was returning?" finally asked Van Dyck, looking troubled.

"Perhaps he has met Saga," I replied.

"Horrors!" Van Dyck ejaculated. "He'll never return, then."

"I only surmise this, you know," said I.

"Maybe he has found the girl and run away with her?" conjectured the other in a more cheerful mood.

"What! an elopement here? Quite a novelty, —a subterranean scandal —hey?"

"Her beauty is exceedingly intoxicating," said Van Dyck with enthusiasm.

"And is she so very beautiful?" I asked, after a brief silence. I hesitated, perhaps, because I was at that time thinking of the remarkable beauty of Kate Reddington. Was Kate not comely? Would not her queenly figure have

been considered even by worldly critics, angelic and lovely? How her dark, hazel eyes, sparkling, luminous, coquettish even, might have fascinated even the strongest man, had they been turned to coquetry. But after all why should I believe that this beautiful goddess, seen and admired by Van Dyck, could bear any semblance to Kate Reddington?

"Absurd!" I muttered audibly. "I do not believe it."

"What are you saying, Sanborn?" asked Van Dyck, looking at me in perfect wonder.

"Oh, nothing——" I murmured with embarrassment. "I was about to ask you, if the girl was lovely."

"She is the loveliest creature I ever laid eyes on!" replied the other forcibly.

"You ought to be a pretty accurate judge of feminine beauty by this time. I imagine that your experience in that direction is very broad," said I, turning off my thoughts with a joke.

"Perhaps not broader than your own," was Van Dyck's repartee.

I said nothing more to Van Dyck about the girl.

A half hour more elapsed, and still Nelson had not returned. I began to believe that some accident had really happened to him, and had suggested to my friends that we go after him.

At that moment Nelson shouted to us from among the rocks. "Come on!" he yelled, "I have found the way."

"Good! good!" we all cried, and then hastened to the passage, which Nelson had at last succeeded in finding.

"I am sure this is not the right passage," Van Dyck persisted, when we had come up with Nelson.

"But we will try it," returned Nelson, "unless you can find us a better one."

"It seems to be the only one here," I said.

Into this deep, dark furrow between the walls we entered, our torches giving us ample light, and showing us the way. The passage was extremely narrow, and it was with great difficulty that we could squeeze our bodies between the rock which composed the two walls. Single-file we walked

through the narrow passage, and came to a small cave, whose floor was composed of very fine, smooth pebbles. Here the defile seemed to terminate.

After looking about for some little while for a way of escape from this cave, we found a small excavation under the walls, looking into another cave of larger dimensions. We dug up the earth and stones, and widened out the hole, and five minutes later we were all in the cave beyond.

Here beneath our feet, were only loose stones, and uneven ledges. It was a most peculiar place. In this cave the works of chance had played havoc with everything, and left everything in a state of unfinished formation.

About the sides of the cave were numerous niches, and deep, round holes in the walls extending inwardly. Could these be air-holes? I viewed them with a feeling of shyness; for I could almost expect to see at any time issuing from some one of these holes, perhaps all, the iron arms of Saga, the giant, as a snake issues from its slough.

Nelson and Van Dyck were looking about the cave for another passage. I saw them several times approach these apertures in the wall of the cave, and peer into them. I saw them turn away in abhorrence.

It appeared that we could make no further progress for the present, so we sat down upon the rocks to eat our lunch, and to discuss our situation. Our supply of food which we had taken from our boat, was fast giving out. We had made up our minds, however, that we would eat heartily while it lasted, and so we did.

“While we live, let us live!”

I repeated the above, for the benefit of my party, and all concurred in the idea which I had meant to convey by means of the quotation.

*While our food lasted we could eat, and be merry. Our thirst was easily quenched by the water, which we found everywhere bubbling up from the rocks. At times the water tasted salt, like that which might have crept into the cave*

from the ocean, but more often it was perfectly tasteless, odorless, and colorless, the combined evidences of pure water. Our small supply of brandy we reserved for medicinal (?) purposes alone. It was a hard thing to do; necessity, however, had often conquered our most serious difficulties. The will is the mightiest organ of man, if properly called into action.

Once during our happy repast we caught the low murmur of voices in the distance. The sound was so faint at first as to appear almost inaudible. Then it grew louder, and louder, until it swelled into tones, voluminous like the roll of thunder in a quiet sky, filling all the caves around with a deep, hollow noise. It was like the unisonance of a hundred voices swelling in concert, and came in the form of a tremendous peal of laughter, like the roar of the jubilant multitude in a vast hall. Numerous men seemed to be exhilarated and all laughing together, yet the sound that we heard appeared only like the echo of their voices.

It grew more audible, until their voices seemed to fill the very cave where we were sitting. We could see no one. The laughter having ceased, the voices were turned to singing, all in the same continual strain, like the wind sighing lowly through the forest. Music seemed to issue from the apertures in the granite walls of the cave. We sprang to our feet, and stood aghast, listening to the weird strains of the awful music. The low hum died away, and then came the song, like the rush of the waters over the cataract, and we heard rude men singing these lines:

"My name is Captain Kidd, as I sailed, as I sailed,  
My name is Captain Kidd, and so wickedly I did as I sailed."

Then silence reigned once more. None of us spoke for we were all astounded by the strange music which we had just heard. The song was not encored, neither was it repeated. Nelson was the first to speak. His voice trembled as he asked: "Who can they be?"

"Mattocks and his men!" exclaimed Van Dyck with a forced smile on his handsome face.

"Pooh! do not be so foolish Van," replied Nelson. "It is not possible for human voices to make such a mournful sound."

"What can it be, then?" inquired the other.

"Remember the mysteries which follow us from cave to cave," said I. "Do they not constantly cling to us? Vanderdonk must be near with his deadly drug. Whom of us will he choose next?"

As I spoke, I turned my head toward the end of the cave, and saw the form of a female, heavily clad in a dark robe, emerge from behind the rock and began to approach us. Her face was partly veiled, and she carried in her hand a torch which was not lighted. My companions were frightened, for they hailed her coming as a bad omen.

"Be not afraid," she said in a sweet, clear tone, "I will conduct you from this place."

"The girl!" exclaimed Van Dyck, and he hastened forward to grasp her hand. But she did not recognize him. She mysteriously waved him off, and began to talk to the rest of us. Poor Van Dyck was embarrassed. Evidently he was mistaken as to her identity. It was another girl. Yet did her voice not sound natural? Van Dyck more than any one else had reasons to feel puzzled about her.

She gave no heed to Van Dyck's movements, but addressed us thus: "I perceive, gentlemen, that you have thrust yourselves once more into danger, and must leave here. If you trust me, I will lead you safely from this place."

"Who are you?" I asked in surprise.

"Do not ask me, sir," she replied with coolness.

"But tell us," I urged, "why you are here in this lonely cavern?"

"My mission is to save men from the hands of the wicked," replied the girl softly.

"What do you mean? Are we not perfectly safe, here under the earth?" I asked excitedly.

"You are in danger my good man!"

"In danger of what?" we cried.

"Have you not just heard strange noises?"

"Yes. Who are these men whose voices we have just heard?" I asked.

The girl laughed musically and replied: "It is the voice of Saga, in whose power you were before I came here. My purpose is to save you all from his iron hands."

"Noble girl!" I exclaimed advancing toward her; but she repelled me.

"Is the gold buried here?" asked Nelson eagerly.

"Saga guards the gold," she only replied.

"Does he often sing?" I asked.

"Frequently he gets lonely, and sings a favorite air of his. He is a sentinel who never deserts his post. Saga is the mighty giant who stands between adventurous men and their fortunes."

Van Dyck now thought that he was sure of the girl's identity. She was the same whom he had met in the passage, where he had felt the hand of Saga upon his throat. She was differently dressed than when he had seen her, yet by her conduct and her voice he thought he recognized her. Beneath her dark veil he saw the full depth of her remarkable beauty.

"Come with me!" she finally commanded, "and I will lead you safely away."

We all began to follow the girl except Nelson, who hung back and was rather disinclined to obey her commands.

"And will you not come with us, sir?" asked the girl persuasively.

"If you will show us the gold, which you say Saga is guarding," returned Nelson stubbornly, "we will follow you."

The girl looked perplexed. "Ah," she said, "you have asked me too much. I am here to save, not to destroy you."

"But we must have the gold, even if we have to fight the giant," said Nelson earnestly.

"Be reasonable, sir," spoke the girl. "It is impossible for any man to take the gold from Saga."

"Let woman do it then, if man cannot!" cried Nelson.  
"You have a power over Saga. He fears you. Help us!"



"No, no," she replied; "I am powerless."

"How?"

"Never mind. I will argue with you no longer. Will you follow?"

Nelson could not do otherwise. He must leave the cave now, or never, for he could not find the way out himself. The girl led us from the cave by the entrance through which she herself a moment before had come. We entered a dark, narrow passage, probably the same in which Van Dyck had been attacked by Saga. Soon we came to a place where two passages met, running triangularly from where we now stood. I was behind, the girl ahead. When we arrived at the point where the two passages branched off in different directions, the girl stopped and waved my companions into the passage leading to the left. I was about to follow, when the strange girl approached me and said: "Wait here! I will return to you presently."

## CHAPTER XVI.

"That she is living  
Were it but told you, should be hooted at  
Like an old tale; but it appears she lives  
Though yet she speak not."

LIKE one in a dream, I waited for the girl to return. Minutes passed as hours, and an hour became a whole day to me. Then the girl came back, having kept her word, leaving my companions somewhere behind. She carried no torch, and so suddenly did she approach me from the darkness, that her coming startled me.

I was leaning against the rocky mass, which composed the wall of the passage in which I had been left an hour previous, where I was thinking over the events of the past few days and nights, when I faintly caught the rustle of her skirts along the corridor, and still believing her to be some little distance away, she at that moment touched my arm, *and spoke in a low tone*: "Come with me!"

"Where have you left my companions?" I asked, startled by her sudden presence.

"Do not ask any questions now," she replied pleasantly. Then she took my hand in her delicate palm, and began to draw me forward. She led me into the corridor at the right. Her hand was warm, and her soft and affectionate touch inspired me with confidence that she would direct me safely, and so I was compelled to follow her.

At first I was more or less confused, and embarrassed, so that I kept silent. The girl noticed my embarrassment and said to me kindly: "Do not fear! I will see that no harm befalls you."

"And my friends?" I inquired.

"They are safe enough," she assured me. And then she pressed my hand in such a tender manner, that my affections were drawn impulsively toward her. I returned it, by holding her own hand more tightly, as lovers often do.

Her face was still closely veiled, and her garments were so black, that her dainty figure became intermingled with the darkness, as to be totally invisible in my sight. She had ordered my torch-light extinguished, and the darkness of the place became most dense.

Along the stony aisle her skirts rustled like silk, and her manner became more pleasing and fascinating, as we proceeded. Now I had begun to talk quite freely with my fair guide, and she seemed more willing to answer my questions than at first. I was feeling anxious about my friends, and had said to the girl by way of inquiry; "Will my companions not lose their way, and perish here in these dark confines?"

"They have their torches, have they not?"

"Oh, yes. But will Saga not molest them?"

The girl laughed, and I heard her sweet voice echo along the empty corridor. She stopped, and laid her hand upon my arm, and answered me.

"Diana will look after the giant," said she, holding to my arm more closely.

"Who pray is Diana?" I asked in surprise.

"Well," said my companion, "we call her the goddess of marriage here."

"And now," said I, "who are you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" she laughed, then she replied: "Have you never heard of Daphne?"

"Oh, yes," said I, "Daphne was a goddess, too. She was turned into a laurel tree."

"So the story runs," replied the girl strangely. "Daphne is not my name."

"Ho, ho!" I exclaimed, "An excellent joke. But I must now have your name."

"Oh, no. Hush! Even the walls of these caverns have ears at times."

"Have you something to reveal?"

"My name!"

"No. Tell me it!" I cried eagerly.

She replied in a whisper: "*My name is Lenora Wallace!*"

"Impossible!" I answered. "How can you be?"

"You have heard of me, then?" she said softly.

"Oh, yes."

"And do you doubt me?" she asked.

"Prove your identity!" I cried.

"How?"

"Unveil your face, and let me see it!"

"Light your torch Rudolph Sanborn, and I will show you the face of Lenora Wallace."

"I believe already," I promptly answered, after hearing her call me by name. "Forgive my scepticism!"

By this time I had lighted my torch and immediately I saw before me the beautiful face of Lenora Wallace, the girl who only a few years ago disappeared from the world so mysteriously.

"You are the same Miss Wallace. The world believes you dead," said I.

"*And so I am dead,*" she replied with a mysterious smile.

"*And yet, as you see, I am not dead.*"

"Tell me how you came here. Why do you not return to your friends?"

"Listen!" she said. "Was it not strange that I should have been swept into this place by the sea. I leaped into the ocean from the deck of a steamboat, and was apparently drowned. But the strangest thing of all is now to be told you. I awoke to find myself, as I thought, on the shore. I was in a cave. I have lived here since. I was not drowned. I was tired of the world, so to free myself from certain disgrace I took my own life. Does the world know concerning my whereabouts?"

"It does not," I replied, staggered at the revelation made by the girl.

"I have more than once repented for my sin," said she gravely.

"And Diana, how came she here?"

"Diana met me here the next summer. But her fate was far different than mine," and the girl's eyes were immediately filled with tears.

"And you call her the goddess of marriage?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered sadly.

"You must have a reason for this," I said inquiringly. "Surely a marriage ceremony would be out of place here, in this damp, cold world, into whose darkness fair Cupid could never hope to enter."

"Not so," replied the girl rather disdainfully. "Even the walls here are written over with that one word, *love*!"

We had now walked only a short distance, when we stepped from the long, narrow corridor which run lengthwise with the partition wall, and came into the same cave where Van Dyck had fallen in love with his charming guide. The little cave was elegantly finished in all its various compartments, with the stalagmites and stalactites, which the place afforded in such abundance. I could not tell now, whether Van Dyck had met Lenora or Diana, but from his description of her beauty, I imagined that my friend had seen the former.

It was all very strange to me. I had not been personally acquainted with Miss Wallace, but I had known her by reputation for several years prior to her disappearance, and

had often seen her in social circles at Bar Harbor during my sojourns there. I knew how her strange death had shocked the social world at Mt. Desert, and how great was the grief of her friends and relatives at the time. The news startled all Mt. Desert where she had been known as a prominent society belle; and her beauty, which had been something extraordinary, her vivacious manners, and modest disposition, had won for her a host of admirers, even among her own sex. She had been courted by many, and rejected by all, save one. The man who had at last won the girl's tender heart proved unworthy of her love, and demonstrated his falsity to her beyond a doubt, when having succeeded in procuring from her a promise of marriage,—a promise which he never intended to fulfil—he left her at the end of the season, never again to renew his vows.

Lenora left Bar Harbor at the end of the season of 18— with a broken heart. Her engagement with the man, who had thus played her false, was but her ruin. And how simple a thing is ruin at times. It does not always come gradually to a person, but may strike and blight the heart in a single moment. A promise broken is too often fatal.

Ruin is often simple enough. A violent shock; a cruel turn of fate; a catastrophe once for all. Be it so: we submit, and all is over. You are ruined: it is well; you are dead?"

Lenora's gay and vivacious spirit had been deadened by one stroke of calamity, which had scathed and scorched her soul. That calamity which had penetrated to the vital seat of happiness was but the discovery of baseness in the heart of the man,—whom in spite of all his faults—she had continued to love most desperately. Her love had driven her to her death.

The real facts concerning her untimely disappearance were never known, as the circumstances attending it were more or less confusing, and the many rumors which went *from mouth to mouth*, unreliable. Suspicion was at once *cast upon her lover*, Lionel St. Andrews, a rich, young *southern* who had in his brief career, captivated, with his

cunning arts, the hearts of many girls. He had always been a notorious flirt, and his conduct in the past had gained for him this well-deserved reputation, yet by means of Lenora's love, he had gained entrance to her heart. Misery entered into this young girl's life, hitherto so pure, at the same moment. It became her downfall.

There was only one link missing in the chain of evidence, which would have fastened the crime upon Lionel St. Andrews. Lenora had left Bar Harbor by boat, while Andrews had left for New York *via* train.

The whole affair had, even then, become exceedingly mixed up. There were those who stood ready to convict Andrews upon their statements, that they had witnessed the couple go on board the steamboat together, while others had seen Miss Wallace depart by steamer in company with friends. The facts were never known. None had known, nor could they tell whither she had gone, or how; but now I had met Miss Wallace who had willingly told me all.

She had left Bar Harbor by boat for Portland, and with an aching heart which darkened her whole existence, she had become desperate, and when a few miles away from the wharf at Bar Harbor, when no eye save God's was looking at her, she had thrown herself into the sea.

When she had finished relating to me the tragic end of her life, I said to her: "Now Miss Wallace you must come back to the world, whence you came, with me."

"I can never do that," she replied sadly.

"Come back with me and accuse your former lover before all the world!"

"I still love him," she answered, much to my surprise.

"But how can you love such a villian?" I inquired indignantly.

"Ah," she replied, "you men but little understand the depth of a woman's love."

"And do you still love such a man?"

"Yes. My heart, my life was his. He little knew how my heart ached for him on that morning when all for him I threw myself, in despair, into the sea. Living, I loved him

and because he refused to keep the heart I gave him, I committed the most atrocious crime possible for anybody to commit. I took my own life. And even dead I love him!"

"Oh, noble woman!" I cried. "You are too good to waste your life here in this submarine grotto. Come back with me to the outer world!"

"Diana might object to such an elopement," she replied jokingly.

"Where is Diana?" I asked. "Can you not show me the goddess of marriage?"

"Behold! there is her altar."

Lenora pointed me to the structure only a short distance away. It was the very altar where Van Dyck had witnessed the ceremony. The girl took me by the hand and led me along in front of this sacred shrine. She bowed her head reverentially, and bade me imitate her movements. We both knelt down with our faces touching the granite under us. She then told me to arise, and when I got up I cast my eyes hurriedly about, and saw to my astonishment, the figure of a girl gracefully walking among the stalagmites toward the altar.

Her dress was like that described by Van Dyck, with the addition of a long, white veil which she wore about her head. I could not see her face, but her figure was that of a comely young lady. With slow and solemn tread she approached the altar, before which I was standing trembling in every limb on account of the strange appearance of the woman. I was about to ask Lenora whether she was Diana, but she clapped her hand over my mouth and bade me keep silent.

Then before my own eyes I saw the strange girl enter her altar and go through the marriage ceremony from the beginning to the end. Was not she the same girl whom Van Dyck had seen? I was now forced to believe that my friend had met Diana instead of Lenora.

Like Van Dyck, I heard this girl sob aloud, as she knelt before the altar. I saw her make the same movements with *her arms, her hands, her lips*, and saw her wed herself to *some fair bridegroom* which her own mind had created and *stood before her*. Could this bridegroom be some fair god?

She took no notice of Lenora and myself, but having thus finished the marriage ceremony she passed away.

When she had gone I stammered: "Is that girl Diana?"

Lenora nodded her queenly head.

"Diana, the goddess of marriage?" I repeated.

"The same," replied Lenora.

"Let us follow her!" I cried.

"Oh, no. Do not disturb her now. She is guarding your friends from Saga," said Lenora.

"Then she will return?" I asked with breathless anxiety.

"Very soon."

"Diana cannot be her real name" I questioned. "She is not a goddess."

"We call her Diana here," answered my companion.

"But that can only be an assumed name. You are called Daphne here, but your name I know."

"Do not question me so closely!" she commanded.

"But I insist upon knowing her real name," I said impatiently.

"Perhaps it will be better for me to tell you. I warn you, however, not to speak in her presence, lest your happiness may be destroyed for the future. Promise me, if only with a man's vow, that you will not speak to her until I command you."

"I promise," said I seriously, regarding the young girl before me.

"Diana, then, is none other than *Kate Reddington!*"

Had the gates of the universe been left ajar, and had I seen all the great heavenly bodies assume miniature shapes and come rolling one after another into the cave where I stood, I should not have been any more surprised than I was to hear this startling revelation made by Lenora concerning Kate Reddington.

I stood transfixed for several moments, as lifeless and immovable as the sphinx.

Kate Reddington living! Had I really seen her here under the sea? But my mind soon came back to me. I could not after all be surprised to learn of Kate's existence



here, after I had already heard her name spoken by Vanderdonk. Lenora Wallace was living here, why could not Kate? I had surmised the truth long ago when Van Dyck had related his story of the girl. But I could not make it seem real. Good news more often comes in more ideal shapes. More than ever did I long to follow her, to tear off her veil, her disguise, and catch her in my arms and cry loudly: "Kate! Kate! Kate! my own lost love!" This desire seized me with such irreconcilable force, that it was with difficulty that I was restrained by the persuasive voice of Lenora from going forward in search of her, whom the *habitués* of this lonely world had christened Diana, but who in reality was my own lost Kate Reddington.

It was now that Lenora whispered to me. Said she: "If you follow her all will be lost. Be patient and she will soon return."

"But why shall I not speak to her? Will she not know me?" I asked in an excited manner. Lenora replied: "Not now. Kate is not like herself. Her case is different. I have a reason for asking you to keep silent."

"How?" I asked, turning toward her with excitement in my eyes.

My curiosity was aroused, and I became anxious to know the rest.

"A single thread," said she, "still holds her to the world. You alone can save her. To this thread she has ever clung. Her mind is in the world above us."

"Tell me all!" I cried. "What is this thread of which you speak?"

"That thread," said Lenora, "is in the hope of marriage with the man she loves."

"Who?" I gasped.

"Were not you and Kate lovers? You would have married her but for the untimely accident which befell her."

Lenora's eyes dropped. Perhaps she was comparing my own true intentions with the false heart of Lionel St. Andrews.

"Yes," I replied solemnly, "Kate and I would have been married the succeeding fall."

"Did you not know, sir," she said, raising her beautiful eyes to mine, "that the most pleasant anticipation of a woman's heart is the thought—the hope—of being married to the man whom she loves?"

"Yes, I presume it is. And I dearly loved Kate," I replied sadly.

"Not as she loved you, Mr. Sanborn," returned Lenora.

"But you say that she still lives for me?"

"Yes. Only on one condition, however, can you have her back."

"Name the condition! Anything—I will do all in my power if only I can get Kate back."

The girl looked at me in a way that I did not understand, and after a moment of meditation, she asked: "Did you come for her?"

"Why should I believe Kate to be alive? I came here for gold, but wealth cannot keep me from my love, if she is truly here."

"And do you still doubt her existence?"

"Oh, no. She must be living if you say so," I replied, quickly repenting for my words.

"You are like all men. Doubt comes to your heart like another Saga. Why do you hesitate to believe Kate's existence when your own eyes have beheld her?"

The girl looked perplexed with me as she added: "If you desire to regain your love, fulfil the condition which I shall name. I am going to marry you to Kate in the very altar before which you now stand!"

"Impossible!" I answered, startled by her proposition. "But name the condition."

"Be silent and do not speak to her when she re-appears at the altar."

"I will do it. I will keep my mouth closely sealed forever, if only—ah, no! I could not talk with Kate, then. I could not tell her of my great love for her. I will be silent."

As I spoke, I turned my head, and saw the girl,—Kate Reddington—approaching the altar. I recognized her

and advanced toward her, and holding out my arms I was about to cry: "Kate! oh, Kate——!" but Lenora caught me by the arm and pulled me back. Said she harshly: "Will you lose all? Speak not to her!"

I stopped and watched with bedazzled mind Kate Reddington, as she approached the altar,—her sacred shrine—where for several years, she had stood and waited for the man whom she loved, to call her his wife, and lead her from the altar, as her imaginary lover had many times done, but this time she did not weep. I saw her rise and direct her footsteps toward the shrine,—her sanctuary, more sacred to her than Diana's altar even.

Then I heard Lenora whisper to me softly: "Prepare yourself for the marriage ceremony."

"Oh, no. You do not mean that I——"

"Do not speak, but come with me!" Lenora took me by the hand, and began to draw me toward Kate. I spoke to Lenora, but this time my words came in a low whisper: "Who will marry us?"

I looked about me, and beheld to my astonishment Vanderdonk, the ex-pirate, with a black robe enveloping his hateful form, advancing with arms upraised, directly behind me.

"Father Comus will perform the marriage rites," she replied softly.

"That man is Vanderdonk—a pirate!" I cried.

"Hush! He is your friend," Lenora whispered. "Father Comus has preserved the life of Kate and myself with his powerful medicines. Be calm!"

"Then I forgive him," said I, thinking of the fate of poor Scott.

I was nervous, and trembled violently, but as I took Kate's hand in mine, I became strong again. Her hand was not cold as it looked. We were standing inside the altar which natural forces had erected, and a feeling of embarrassment stole over me, like that which has often come to the mind of him who for the first time finds himself already being fastened to the idol of his heart by the chains of matrimony.

"For better or for worse," I heard Father Comus say, and in these words a man can often see a field for speculation equally as broad, and his chances are as uncertain as in the stock markets or other lotteries.

Marriage is not always a failure, and for this reason it becomes frequently a lottery to him who engages in it without malice aforethought. I loved Kate, as she did me,—with a true heart.

Kate stood erect, in all the majesty of her beauty here beneath the sea, where the currents of old ocean had swept her once lifeless body. She had come into the hands of Vanderdonk, and her life had been restored to her by his drugs, which give the dead everlasting life. Kate was alive once more. I felt her hand move, her pulse throb, as I held it in my own before the altar. I heard her breathe, and heard her innocent heart beat within her womanly breast. I felt the influence of her great love around me,—that love which binds the dead to the living. I heard Father Comus,—thus known by the girls—repeat the marriage ritual, and ask Kate if she would take me for her husband.

Instantly the thread which held her to the lower world was put asunder. She tore off her veil, opened wide her eyes, and with a joyful cry, threw herself into my arms.

"Rudolph!" she cried at last.

"Kate! oh, Kate, my darling! My own lost Kate,—my wife!"

"Forever," she replied greatly overjoyed. "I have waited for you all these years. Why did you not come to me before?"

I could not speak, and for several moments we remained locked in each others arms. It was a joyful moment,—a moment when our hearts were united in that love in which Death only had kept us apart.

When I looked about me I noticed that Lenora, and Father Comus,—strange Vanderdonk—had both departed. We saw them no more. I turned to Kate who was *silently reclining* in my arms, and kissed her passionately *once, twice, aye, several times.* Dearest Kate, my wife!"

said: "Will you now come back to the world, and live happily with me?"

She opened her large, hazel eyes, still more luminous than ever before with love for me, and in the look she gave me I read her only reply: "I will."

## CHAPTER XVII.

"That ever holds: Who riseth from a feast  
With that keen appetite that he sits down?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again  
His tedious measures with the unbated fire  
That he did pace them first? All things that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed."

THE ever patient reader is now invited to return with the narrator to Van Dyck and Nelson, who with Larkin and Jim White, had been led by the girl Lenora into the left hand passage-way, where darkness ever sits enthroned. I had been purposely left behind, as the reader already knows, but had not been missed by my friends until Lenora had returned to me. My mind, strange as it may seem, had been too busy with the startling events, which had so unexpectedly come upon me to allow me to give that attention to the safety and welfare of my friends which they deserved, and which in the past I had ever given them.

Lenora had assured me of their safety, and I did not give myself further alarm about them. Intuitively I believed in the girl, though I had no outward way of telling how she knew that they were not in danger.

Afterwards I was to learn that my friends had been undergoing an experience different from my own.

Mine had been rather a pleasant adventure. I had been made mysteriously happy by having met my lost love, dead Kate Reddington; and had stood up with her in the very altar which had been erected by our fate, and had taken her for my wife.

*In the meantime my companions, less fortunate than myself, had been grappling with Saga, the mighty giant.*

Van Dyck says: "I now find myself in the same passageway, where I had before met the giant, from whose iron hands I was timely rescued by my charming guide. Again I find her here, though her face she keeps constantly veiled, so that I am not able to tell with certainty, whether she is the girl with whom I had previously fallen in love, or some other lovely creature, who like her is wearing out her life here under the sea, like some beautiful mermaid. Our guide is charming, like a fair angel, whether she be the same who refused my love or not. Her graceful figure darting in and out of the darkness is a source of comfort to each one of us, here in this God-forsaken place, which nature has left in a state of unfinished formation. When she goes she leaves our hearts, like ourselves, in darkness, for in her absence there is a dreadful uncertainty hovering near us. Her coming is like the sunrise, ever joyous, ever glorious. In her presence we feel ourselves safe from the powerful grasp of the monster. After the girl has brought us into this narrow defile, hemmed in by granite walls, our fair guide leaves us for several moments, and then for the first time I notice that Sanborn is missing. I have told Nelson that the girl has returned to bring our friend to us. After a brief absence, the girl comes back, but she does not bring Sanborn.

There is no veil over her face now, and by the light of her torch I now see that she is without mistake the very girl whom I had met here previously. Her dress is the same, and she comes and goes at pleasure, but is sure to return at opportune times. More than once during the past hour she has, no doubt, saved us from the deadly grip of Saga, a powerful monster whom we cannot see, but whose arm we fear.

Some untold fate has brought us to the very spot where lies the iron pot which I had formerly discovered, and where I was once forced to respect the sentinel who guards it. What an enthusiastic fellow is Nelson! He stands head and shoulders above us all in his ambition to achieve the purposes of our expedition. He thinks the pot is filled with gold, and in this belief he is not mistaken. With the assistance of Jim White and Larkin, he has forced the cove

the pot, and I now see him, like Shylock the Jew, avariciously surveying the golden coins before his eyes.

He thinks that the gold, if we can take it away from Saga, will save our company from serious disaster, and its members from bankruptcy. He is now digging up the mud and stones about the pot, and with their picks the men are trying to raise the iron vessel from its resting-place. Nelson has asked me to assist them, but I opposed the work by telling them that Saga will surely resist and kill us, if we undertake to put our plans into execution by carrying off the gold. Nelson does not listen to me. I am provoked with him, and have taken occasion to rebuke him severely for his unreasonable ambition.

The girl looks more beautiful than ever as she stands now confronting us, and her coolness toward me gives me at times much displeasure; but when I begin to realize how potent is her influence over the giant, I feel happy because she is near to protect us.

Much to my dissatisfaction, I notice that Nelson and the men have succeeded in lifting the pot from the ground. Jim White and Larkin have slyly put a few pieces of the gold into their pockets. Nelson at last says in a tone of triumph: 'Boys, here is the long-sought-for gold. Here is our fortunes and our fame. The letter is at the bottom of our great achievement. I am proud that I am a member of the 'E. and L.' Mining Company, with a ton of bright and shining shekels in our treasury. This pot of gold is the income derived from our first efforts in the uncertain field of speculation. We can now take our gold and return to the upper world, and claim recognition from all as very wealthy men.'

I reply to Nelson, but my words do not please him. I have given him no assurance that we shall ever be able to carry away the gold. I have just said to him: 'I do not consider this find to be of any importance unless we are allowed by Saga to take the gold away. We have made the discovery, but have not yet completed the conquest.' I was thinking of Saga's persistency and power. Who can overcome the strong hand of Destiny? By what unheard-of

magic can man turn the impossibilities of this life into things which are easily accomplished? Fortune turns the wheel, and we go round with it at each and every rotation.

Nelson appears to be provoked because his strength is not equal to the task of raising the gold. All four of us cannot lift it.

At last my friend says to me: 'Let's divide the gold into four equal parts, and in this manner convey the coins into the adjoining cave, where we shall be beyond the reach of Saga.'

The suggestion struck me favorably at first, because I had not allowed myself, perhaps, to consider the impossibilities of the undertaking. My companions are in the act of dividing the gold, when a gentle voice cries: 'Stop!' I look up and see the girl, and on her face is a troubled expression. Approaching us she continues: 'Do not try to force a fortune against such odds! This treasure you can never possess, beyond these walls. There is none who can relieve Saga of the gold, save it be the ghost of Captain Kidd himself.'

'But don't you see that we have the gold in our power?' inquires Nelson triumphantly.

The speculator is jubilant over his plunder, and cries out to the girl in an insolent voice: 'Do you not see the gold?'

She replies sternly, but her voice is sweet: 'Put it back where the hand of Destiny hath placed it, and there let it be, until time itself hath grown rusty and worn out with its old age. Let no man be so foolish as to grapple with the Impossible. Thou art wiser men, I trow, and should know that your weak bodies were not made to become invincible bulwarks against the thunderous weight of fortune. Thou art weak, my friends, and too inferior in physical strength to carry away even that which you have found. In years long ago didst men try their strength against impregnable Fate, and were severely repulsed. So think it not strange, if you are kept from that which you seek. I warn each and every one of you not to attempt to leave this place with any portion of the contemptible gold, which you



have found. It is a strong temptation, I know, yet I say to you, 'Yield not.' Saga is watching you from every crevice of this granite wall, and will seize him who dare smuggle away his gold.'

The girl having thus addressed us, disappeared in the same mysterious manner that she had several times done. 'Where has the girl gone?' asks Nelson, having desisted in his work after he has heard her admonition.

'I do not know,' I answered him.

'Do you think she is chaffing us?'

'Oh, no,' I reply. 'If I were to speak from my own experience, Nelson, I would say the girl is right. Saga has got a terrible hold on this gold, and I know that I should prefer his grip should be there, rather than upon my throat. I do not want any part of the wealth.'

Nelson stands staring at me with wondering eyes for several moments before he speaks to me. Then I am surprised to hear him say to me: '*Et tu, Brute?*'

'Aye, aye, old man. I am out of it.'

'Why?' asks Nelson.

'You have heard what the girl has said?'

'Yes; but do you think she is in earnest?' he inquires, looking at me wildly.

'I do,' I reply calmly.

'It's a big bluff,' says Nelson emphatically.

'Do not be so foolish, my friend. It is impossible for any man to carry away the gold, so why do you hesitate to put it back, where it belongs?'

'I believe you are really growing superstitious, Van. I am almost ashamed of you.' Nelson does not realize the gravity of our situation. Sometimes men are masters of their fate, but Nelson is not even master of himself. He will not even allow his mind to give way to reason. His only thought, his only motive now, is to gain possession of the gold, which he has discovered. But even in the midst of his desire to take the gold, he sees the obstacle. He dare not face the *giant* here in the darkness. In the open field he might be *bold even before the giant*, but within these underground

passages, what man can be brave? I see Nelson throw down the gold and walk away; and then he stops abruptly and begins to meditate. He speaks to me finally, and I laugh at him, when he says: 'Van Dyck you are superstitious.' I do not offer any denial, but admit my weakness.

'I shall not leave these caverns,' says Nelson, 'until I am able to carry the gold with me.'

'I am afraid you will not leave here, then,' I returned. 'The girl has spoken truly, and has rightly warned us against creating disfavor in the mind of the giant. Having once felt the hand of this mighty Hercules upon my throat I can well understand what her admonition means.'

There is no man so persistent, so determined, so unreasonable,—perhaps there may be only a few such,—who will not give way to reason, when coupled with the dreadful anticipation of coming ill. Henry Nelson's mind was human, and could be approached by common sense. My words have had much effect, and I have at last, succeeded in persuading him to leave the gold, and come with me to find Sanborn."

Van Dyck further says: "We are now retracing our steps through the defile in order to find Sanborn who has by some accident strayed away from us. We fear that he has been lost. Nelson is still mourning about the gold, and wants to return for it. Suddenly I hear a loud cry behind me. It startles me, and each particular hair of my head stands on end. I am truly frightened, and as I look behind me to see whence the noise cometh, I see Jim White pinned firmly to the wall by some unseen hand. The poor sailor man is gasping for breath, and his face is as white as the ghost of Orestes, and then it turns fiery red, gasping in the throes of that awful struggle with Saga, the giant, and the faithful servant of Satan whose body, perhaps, the wicked Gorgons had turned into stone by a single glance of their petrifactive eye. His strength, however, he still retains, only with ten-fold vigor against him who would dare touch the treasure which he is so miraculously guarding.

The Evil Spirit which the fearful James had all the time been dreading to meet here in the caves, had at last come to him unexpectedly, and the monster giant is choking him as he choked me.

We are all overcome with fright. Nelson and myself have been to the rescue of the sailor, whose life is in jeopardy, and at this moment hanging in the balance. When within a few feet of the man, Nelson and myself become helpless. Our strength fails us entirely, and our bodies become numb. We cannot see the hand, which is holding White with a death grip, but we feel the presence of some powerful and mysterious being. I know now that Jim White is in the unremitting grasp of Saga.

My speech fails me also. I try to call out for help, for the girl to come and save us, for Larkin not to approach, but I cannot utter a single word. I am unable to explain this dangerous effect upon my vocal organs, which the presence of the giant seems to have, nor do I understand why my strength has been taken from me, unless my fear has overcome me to such an extent, that it has killed my nerves and overcome my whole physical being.

Nelson is in the same trouble as myself. He stands as solid and lifeless as the granite walls about him, and his power has left him as completely as it has me.

While I wonder, the girl appears. I see her approach White who looks like a dead man. His eyes have rolled up into his head, and his breast heaves not. He breathes no longer. His face looks ghastly. I can almost imagine that the poor sailor is saying to us: "Waal pals, good-bye! I reckon my time has come."

The girl tries in her mysterious way to overcome the giant, but the powerful grip of Saga relaxes not in her presence, as it had done when the giant had seized me. She turns to us hopelessly. She looks agitated as if her mind is puzzled.

All the time poor White remains insensible. Nelson and myself are both speechless and powerless. Thank heaven *our sight and our hearing* still remain to us.

The girl is even more troubled when she sees Nelson and myself within the power of Saga, and when she tries to save us and fails, she turns to Larkin and says: 'Tell me the circumstances! In what manner do you arouse the wrath of this Evil Spirit? Have you carried away the gold?'

'Oh, no my good lady,' Larkin replies, 'we've left the gold behind us.'

'That makes me wonder the more,' says the girl gloomily. 'I have always had complete power over the giant until now. I must rescue these men, and if yonder sailor is not released from Saga's iron hand within five minutes he will be dead forever.'

I see the girl turn again toward White. 'Oh, what can be done!' she murmurs in despair.

'I do not understand it,' she says again to Larkin, who now has begun to tremble violently through fear,—or has the influence of Sago reached him?

'I am puzzled for the first time,' she adds, 'since I became the spirit that I am. Your friends are in danger. Are you sure that the sailor has none of the gold about him?'

She does not wait for Larkin's reply, but advances toward the sailor, Jim White.

A pleasant smile lights up her angelic face, when examining the pockets of White, she extracts therefrom several pieces of the gold. Then she quickly disappears, and even while Nelson and myself who stood transfixed, as it were, like one of the Pyramids of Egypt, wondering if the girl would come to save us, she returned, and again stooping over the dead form of White she began to brush his hair back over his forehead, precisely in the same peculiar fashion that she had done with me when bringing me back to life, after being choked nearly to death by Saga.

Already Nelson and myself are free men again, which fact tells us that the giant is gone. In another moment Jim White is on his feet, as well as ever, though overcome somewhat with fear. The sailor does not speak, but I say to him: 'Waal pal, I reckon you've been in a tight place.'

The sailor only smiled, but the smile was a forced one. *He did not appear quite so indifferent to the things going on*

about him as formerly, namely, when I had called his attention to the strange tracks in Crystal Cave. He was not so frightened either as the reader would naturally suppose he would have been, for he had become accustomed to these mysteries, and expected their coming as he did the approach of future time. Jim thought it nothing strange that the giant had grasped him, though he knew not that it was the few golden coins which he had in his pockets, that had nearly caused his death.

'Come now hasten from this place,' said the girl, 'into which mortal men will never again be allowed to enter. The gold which thou seekest, oh, foolish men!—is not to be disturbed again by men as long as the world shall endure. No power can overcome the will of the giant, who guards the plunder of his captain as a faithful hound watches the door of his master's house. Your enterprise is a failure. It was so in the beginning. Come with me into the next cave, then I must take my departure, since already my altar and my love awaits me.'

'Oh, do not leave us again!' I plead, trying to grasp this fair creature by the arm. But she gives me such a look, with her dark hazel eyes that the expression freezes my very soul. And then she thus addresses us: 'Gentlemen, do not get discouraged because you have failed once in your youthful lives. You need your courage for further perils and dangers which await you before leaving these caverns. You must not despair though you are compelled to return to the world empty handed. Pardon my impertinence, if I tell you that you have come on a fool's errand. I perceive,' she continues, turning towards Nelson, 'that there is great disappointment among you. He who at first saw much in little, now sees nothing in much. To such a one let me say: 'Do not despair!' When men are young there should be no sorrow in the world because of their failures. Future action should not be so crippled. But one should arise from the ruins of his misfortune only to aspire to heights still more grand and glorious. Long live the members of the 'E. and L.' Mining Company, but may the corporation itself soon

perish. When you again find yourselves standing upon the verge of such an enterprise, remember that the old adage, which so well suited the world in the days of our Roman Fathers, still has an important place in the great lesson of mankind: '*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*' And now my good men, farewell, until we meet again.'

'She is gone!' I exclaim.

'What does she mean? Will she return again?' asks Nelson, who now stands looking at me with astonishment in each eye.

'Do not ask me,' I reply. 'We must hasten before Saga seizes us again.'

\* \* \* \* \*

'An hour has elapsed,' says Van Dyck, 'since the girl made her farewell speech. We are now in a huge cavern, where darkness dwells amid cold, damp and uneven ledges.

There is but little hope in our hearts, and the thought of finding Mattocks and Sanborn and returning to the world above is all that cheers us. But even through this one hope there runs a thread of doubt or uncertainty, which shuts out much of the light which tries to enter into our hearts. I have many times been in despair, but never have I experienced such as that gloom which now hangs over me. To see the ever-hopeful Nelson give up, to be lacking in courage, wanting in hope, and looking downcast, gives me no cheer. Nelson has been *esprit de corps*,—the life of our enterprise. Not even the contradictions of his companions have jarred his purpose before. He has always had full faith in the letter of E. L. until now.

The opposition of Saga the giant has caused a wonderful change. Hope has been suddenly turned to grief. How brave he has ever been! Only a few hours ago I heard him say: 'I will get possession of the gold, even if I am obliged to fight the giant.'

There are times, I trow, in the lives of men, when even the surplus of one's activity gives out after a long endurance, and it is then that the treasury of one's mind becomes depleted to the great disadvantage of the man. The world

hath pity for a people whose poverty scourges them. It deplures the sad condition of the man whose courage and ambition have forsaken him.

In Henry Nelson, as I regard him now, I see nothing that reminds me of his former individualism. His highest hopes are crushed, while his smaller anticipations have fled with the greater ones. Nothing is left him save the realization of his own failures.

In this respect, however, he is not alone, for to all of us who anticipated so much and have gained nothing, there comes the same feeling of bitter regret. Unlike the rest of us, Nelson will lose all by our defeat at the hands of Saga. His courage has not only gone, but his money as well, and it is the thought that he must return to New York—if in fact he is permitted to escape from these caverns—a poor man, that causes his gloom more than anything else.

In his mind he has ever allowed his thoughts to build for him, all sorts of airy castles and fairy temples, in which some day he hoped to be able to dwell, surrounded by the ease and elegance which his wealth might afford him. These temples have not only tottered—they have fallen. How black the ruin!

I am surprised not a little to see my friend give up so easily. Nelson has always been sanguine even when his companions had given up all hope. In the tracks of Crystal Cave, Sanborn tells me that Nelson had seen hope—in those tracks made by the creatures which crawled over the land in other epochs of the world, when these underground ledges lay in soft beds of clay and mud upon the surface of the earth. In these marks of animal life, Nelson had been too quick to perceive the symbols of coming fortune. In the cruel opposition of Saga, however, he had found his despair.

It is now that I recall the lines which I have often repeated before, not on similar occasions, but illustrative of the same idea:

Full merrily the bumble-bee doth sing.  
Till he hath lost his honey and his sting:  
And being once subdued in armed tail,  
Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"Twice for one step I'll groan, the way being short,  
And piece the way out with a heavy heart."

"I AM growing weary of this underground world."

Thus says Henry Nelson, relating his adventures already alluded to by Huson Van Dyck.

"I think I prefer a supermundane existence after all. I doubt if my adventures will ever prove themselves of very much advantage to me, or my companions. Our failure to capture the gold has destroyed my brightest hopes. I have always been sanguine notwithstanding my bitterest disappointments; but now like King Richard, I will piece the way out with a heavy heart. Van Dyck wears a gloomy countenance because he sees no way out of these caverns. I believe that there is an opening into the world somewhere, and although I may appear to my friends to be wretchedly despondent, on account of our recent failures, yet my heart is still full of courage and hope when I stop to contemplate the possibility of our escape from these dark confines. O, what a Hades is this! I look before me and see nothing but darkness. It is all about me, and some of these dark shadows have found their way into my heart.

I have been a great loser in this enterprise, yet my wisdom, all of which I seemed to have found here in these dark abodes, will I believe, more than remunerate me for the time and money which I have lost here.

Van Dyck says that all is lost.

I do not dispute him, nor do I agree with him. Men have not been born with the same ideas, nor did the all-wise Creator so decree, for if he did, then certainly have the objects of his creation gone wide of their mark. Therefore, I hold my tongue in my mouth, and my opinions I keep secretly locked in my brain.

This adventure is the wildest speculation of my life. I doubt if I could ever engage in any undertaking that would be one-half as reckless or daring as this one, if I should be



allowed to live a thousand years longer. I am sorry that I am unable to foretell for the reader what the end of this expedition will be, and what this adventure will all mean to the members of the 'E and L' Mining Company who have engaged in it. My companions are growing discouraged, and all are inclined to be homesick. There is but little hope among us. We are in a great cavern, but whether it is located under the sea or under the earth none can tell. By the composition of the rocks here, and by the dampness, and by the saline odors which fill this huge grotto, I imagine that I am somewhere now under the bed of old ocean.

I am surprised to find air here, and still more do I wonder how it got here. But I permit myself to ask no questions, save those which can be readily explained, having lived here so long among these mysteries. I am not sufficiently versed in the science which men call cosmography to understand for myself, or to explain to others the secret things that exist in the hollow confines of this earthly sphere.

There is only one thing to be done. We must now go forward and find the end of this cavern, if indeed there be any. I feel somewhat broken in spirit, and disheartened because I have been repulsed from my purpose by the giant Saga. I have been unfortunate in that I have been prevented from carrying away the gold which I had found.

Like the mind of the soldier, who having marched many weary days into the enemy's land only to meet his defeat, is now ready to begin his homeward march under the burden of shameful disappointments, so do I take up my cross, and begin my retreat. Like him, too, do I feel grateful to some kind Providence, that I am still permitted to undertake the march homeward, and too well, like the soldier who is on the retreat, do I realize that the enemy is still lurking in the country through which I am about to march.

Wily Nature with her finesse and strategy has drawn up her forces both in my front and rear, so that I must either crush my way through these rocky battlements, or surrender *myself up to the inevitable.*

*It took us but little over an hour, according to my reckoning, to cross the cavern in which we had been left by the girl, but*

the end of our journey had not yet come. It was with much difficulty that we were able to climb a passage leading into the adjoining cave. Here the air was closer than we had found it in any of the other caverns, and a strong saline smell met our nostrils. The rocks beneath our feet were exceedingly damp, and slimy, and very lubricous. About the bottom of the cave were strewn shells and other relics of marine life, which caused me to believe that we were in a submarine cavern.

The farther we proceeded, the less hope did each of us entertain of ever getting back to the world, whence we came. There seemed to be here under the sea no end of caverns, passages and chambers, or else there existed only a small number of them and we had been passing from one to the other successively. But I had not seen anything in one cavern to remind me particularly of any of the others. The interior of each seemed to be differently constructed, and in some of them the air was much closer and less pure than in others. In the cave which we had now entered respiration became difficult, but not quite impossible. It was evident to me that we had never been in this cave until now. Van Dyck held the same opinion as myself. He thought that we had wandered too far out under the sea, and would not be able to find our boats if we pursued our present course.

For my part I could not tell where we were, or whither we were going, but felt confident that we should be as safe by taking one course as another. It became difficult for us to camp down here, since there was no wood with which we could build a fire, nor could we lie down upon the cold, wet rocks. We were all of us very much fatigued, disheartened and sleepy.

The worst feature of this cavern, however, was the awful smell that at times swept with the air draught through the grotto, a smell of some dead or decaying matter either vegetable or animal, which on investigation we found to be of the latter kind. It was positively distasteful to our senses of smell, and the air was most obnoxious to breathe. Van Dyck and myself were made suddenly sick to our stomachs

by the dreadful odor, while White and Larkin hemmed and coughed violently, and growled almost incessantly about the bad air.

At no time since our adventure began, did I feel so thoroughly hopeless as I did here in this dreadful place. I knew that our race had been run, and that we had achieved nothing by our enterprise thus far. The extreme dampness which prevailed in this cavern, chilled me to the heart, and quenched every spark of ambition, which my failure to capture the gold had left burning in my bosom, and my terrible nausea overpowered me so completely that I could not make myself believe that I had ever been anything more in the world than a school-boy who is fond of play, and antagonistic to the performance of all work. In my own estimation I was truly an insignificant being. Locomotion even worried me, for I had no courage to bend my steps toward that darkness, through which the light of hope never comes. I became almost repulsive to the air here, and at times I refused to breathe. Sometime I really hoped that I might choke to death, for to die here would prevent all further suffering. And why should I not desire to do away with this life, to cast off this earthly robe, and by dying here save myself from these earthly thoughts and miserable desires, which sooner or later must overtake and draw me backward, until like Sisyphus, I, too, am condemned by Pluto to roll up hill the stone which constantly falls back again? Finally, my strength gives out and I am crushed to death by the stone. Why not die now, and save myself from the awful death? Men do not dread death. It is the Hereafter from which they recoil. The uncertainty which lies across the horizon of the grave does not allow our desires to fly with us toward death, but to keep closer and closer to life, that by the aid of hope we may still be able, as one noted writer has expressed it: 'To climb to Heaven, or at the worst, if she also proves but a kindly mockery given to hold us from despair, be gently lowered into the abysses of eternal sleep.'

*Such thoughts come only to torment us and make us unhappy. But how doubtful are our worldly adventures, and*

how still more doubtful are to be our adventures in that infinite world beyond the grave?

These odors or bad smells which I have mentioned, grew worse and worse as we proceeded across the dark bosom of the cave. This dreadful stench was very soon accounted for, however, when we came upon a large heap of bones, which seemed to be lying there upon the floor of the cave in a state of perpetual decay. We examined them, with our hands tightly clasped over our mouths, in order to prevent as much as possible the hateful odor from entering into our stomachs, and breathed at intervals through our nostrils. These bones were small, that is many of them, being no doubt those of inferior animals which had in some period of the world, perhaps in the early part of the Quarternary age, been dragged into the cave by the larger beasts which then existed, for food. This idea was subsequently proven to be correct by our discoveries. But I could not explain satisfactorily, no more than could Van Dyck, how these bones had found their way into this grotto so far below the sea, unless time itself had been the means of sinking this cave beneath the surface of the earth. Undoubtedly this explanation was the only true one which could be given by unscientific men like Van Dyck and myself. This bony mass seemed to be constantly decaying, but by some unknown cause or causes, the bones had never been allowed by nature to rot away entirely.

Taking my torch I went on ahead of my companions in order to make a few personal explorations, when I soon came to a place where these bones were mingled with the stalagmites, constructing the floor of the cavern. I was somewhat surprised to find traces of animal life here, and had now begun to put full faith and credit in the story of my friend, Sanborn, concerning the tracks in Crystal Cave. So numerous were these bones that I could imagine myself in the caves of Gaylenreuth, or at Kirkdale in England. A little further on from where I now stood I beheld a sight which turned out to be something still more wonderful and startling than I had ever seen before either in the world above, or in the earth below.

I had accidentally run against something hard, which at first I had taken to be a large stick of stalagmite, but which on examination I found to be of bony substance. There were four of these bony columns, two in front and two behind, so mingled with the stalagmites and stalactites as not to be distinguished from them, and above I beheld an arched roof having a rib-like shape. My curiosity was greatly aroused, and I began to carefully examine the structure over my head. I found the four columns jointed in places, giving them the appearance of legs, which in some period of the world might have belonged to some animal. My wonder became great, and I continued my investigations. Above me, in front of the structure, I saw a large heavy mass like a huge rock from which were projected two horn-like things, which resembled the tusks of an elephant. I climbed upon the roof, and learned to my surprise that I was really upon the back of some giant animal. I came to the conclusion that I had discovered the pondrous skeleton of an elephant. But such an elephant! Every limb seemed to be perfect, and the complete frame-work of an elephant was visible in the light of my torch, which threw its rays directly upon the bony structure. The skeleton looked as natural as it would had it been found in the jungles of Central Africa. I was very jubilant, and I cried out to my companions to come to me.

'Boys,' said I, when my friends had come up, 'what will you give me for my prize?'

'What in the world are you doing up there?' cried Van Dyck, when he saw me sitting among the stalactites.

'Riding the elephant!' I replied, 'come up closer.'

'What do you mean?' asked my friend. 'Where is your elephant?'

As my companions drew near their torches lighted up the scene in such a brilliant way, that further questioning was quite unnecessary, for there they beheld me sitting on the back of an elephant's (?) skeleton.

'For heaven sake!' exclaimed Van Dyck, as he let his torch fall from his hand to the floor of the cave. 'You don't say that you have really found an elephant?' he added coolly.

'Oh, no,' said I jokingly, 'it is only the skeleton of one.'

'But how did it get here?' Van Dyck asked, beginning to examine the bony frame. 'Great Scott! Great Scott!' he muttered to himself.

'Not Scott, but great Jumbo,' I said ludicrously. 'Hi! hi whoa Bolivar!'

Van Dyck laughed, as if pleased with my performance on the elephant's back.

'That elephant never saw a circus ring, I'll warrant,' said he.

'This gentleman,' alluding to the skeleton, 'strode the earth long before the circus menagerie.'

'Elephants! You are not in earnest,' I asked. 'If it is not a circus elephant how could he get into North America? We are not in Asia or Africa, you know.'

'Do you not know what this skeleton is?' asked Van Dyck. 'Have you never heard of the North American mastodon?'

I replied that I had heard of the existence of such an animal but had not been fortunate enough to see one before.

'I have seen the skeleton of the mastodon before to-day,' said Van Dyck. 'An animal once existed in North America, called the mastodon, which surpassed in magnitude those of other parts of the world. The mastodon was much larger than our elephant.'

'Larger than Jumbo?' I asked.

'Oh, yes. I once saw the skeleton of a mastodon, full as large as this one here, in the British Museum.'

'What shall we do with this skeleton? Is not this ivory very valuable?' I asked.

'Yes, ivory is very valuable,' he replied. 'Its scarcity makes it so.'

Van Dyck and myself began to clear away the stalagmites, and to beat it from the bones; and when we had completed our work the whole frame fell in a powdered mass upon the floor of the cavern. The bones had completely decayed and had curiously been supported through centuries of time by the natural formations about them. Here lay the mastodon

in a pulverized state, and we went away and left him, whispering to ourselves: 'Peace to his ashes!'"

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour afterwards Nelson and his party had come into a small cave which opened into another cavern of immense size; and here daylight sat perched upon the rocks.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"But wherefore could I not pronounce 'Amen?'"

I had most need of blessing and 'amen' stuck in my throat."

"LET us thank heaven for the light," said Van Dyck, "dim as it may seem. It is, however, the glorious sunlight streaming into the cave from the bright world outside. God be praised! We are saved! We are saved!"

Van Dyck sat down upon the rocks and gravely bowed his head.

"Hurrah! Hail glorious light!" shouted Nelson, throwing down his torch. "There must be a way out from this place."

"Sure! Sure! Sure!" exclaimed Jim White with childish enthusiasm. "There's an opening ahead I reckon, where the light leaks in. Wonder where we will come out? China I reckon, pals."

A strange twilight hovered or brooded over the rocks, light entering by some hidden casement under the sea, pale, mystical, yet real.

Van Dyck was the first to notice the change, as in advance of all he led his companions into the giant cave, perhaps the same cavern where he alone on that fatal morning had wandered amid his terror and fear, after having lost Mattocks and his companions. Through several orifices the light shone in with an Elysian radiance, softening and blending all harsh lineaments within the cave. Miniature rainbows seemed floating about in those places where the sunlight stole into the cave to kiss the darkness, and to cheer and *warm the hearts* which might beat within its hidden recesses. *One look at the light* was enough to thrill the hearts of these

adventurous gentlemen, about whose minds cruel darkness had cast her blindful robes; and cloud after cloud was dispelled from the heart of each, or chased away by the sunbeams which poured into the cave in vast numbers, and danced merrily upon the rocks. It seemed as if some mighty power had lifted the thick covering from the earth, and left the bright heavens exposed to their view. It was evidently a glorious sight! Perhaps, they conjectured, it was morning in the world outside, and the piercing rays of an eastern sun were putting to flight the dark shadows everywhere, whether upon the rugged mountain sides, in the closeted nooks of the valley, in the dense forests, or in dark caverns under the earth and sea, wherever an opening might exist large enough for a tiny sunbeam to crawl through.

The storm, which had witnessed the beginning of that perilous undertaking, and which had ridiculed so madly their descent into the first cave on that fearful night, had wasted away in its awful derision, and had now sunk away below the southern horizon, where at last it had vanished. After the storm comes sunshine.

The sun shines brighter on account of the blackness of the storm which preceeds it. Thus it would seem to one who had experienced storm and calm upon the ocean. The heart is much more joyous amid pleasures gained after long misfortunes. The light which seemed to exist here in this cavern, looked very brilliant to these young men, though in reality it was most pale and not vivid. It relieved them of a burden under which they had groaned, namely, the uncertainty of their ever again seeing the light of day. A deep murmuring sound, perhaps the growling of the angry sea, broke the dreadful stillness of the cavern, a heavy doleful sound like thunder rumbling in a distant sky.

"Hark!" cried Nelson, when Van Dyck had finished speaking. "What noise is that we hear?" he asked.

"Thunder," replied Van Dyck, "there is a shower in the air."

All had stopped to listen.

"The sea, the sea!" yelled out Jim White, enthusiastically.



"There is no thunder in the clouds to-day. I reckon them are breakers that we hear."

"Perhaps we are near Thunder Cave," conjectured Van Dyck. "Hark! I believe we are near the shore."

"Breakers! breakers, dead ahead!" roared Larkin, like a sailor who is on the lookout aboard of a ship which is in the fog. "The thunder rolls and makes the earth tremble, but the sea rages," said the sailor, "but does not jar the earth. See?"

"I reckon that we see, Larkin, that the sea is raging not a great way off," responded White, assuming a most comical attitude, and screwing his mouth about into a variety of shapes, as if to give greater emphasis to his statements. "I am allers willin' to allow that my friends, Van Dyck and Nelson, know more about their geologies and animal kingdom, and kerbonifrous kintries than we do, Larkin, but when it comes down to the matter of passin' judgment on the difference betwixt thunder and tha heavy sea, I reckon we know our places thar."

The two men laughed vociferously, and even Nelson and Van Dyck could not altogether smother their feelings, and joined in the laughter.

"Well Jim, if this noise comes from the sea," asked Nelson, "where are we? Are we under the sea or under an island?"

"Can't jest say as to that," replied the sailor shortly. "I reckon you ought to know, Mr. Nelson."

The other was vexed.

"Do you think that the cave opens out into the sea?" Nelson inquired sharply.

"Hugh!" ejaculated White, "maybe it does, and maybe I don't know much 'bout it."

"Pardon me, White," said Nelson, "I thought I understood you awhile ago to affirm your superior knowledge concerning the sea? I am sorry if I am mistaken."

"Oh, them are breakers, sure; but I know nothin' 'bout this cave. One thing am mighty sartin, sir, I hear the sea *a roarin'.*"

Hereupon the sailor leaped upon a huge rock near by, and began to sing loudly:

“Oh, de sea am a roarin’  
And de rocks am a snorin’  
For we are sure to get home by and by.”

“There, that will do,” said Nelson. “No more of your nonsense until we get out of this place.”

“I reckon we are almost out, sir. I can smell the outside world already,” said the sailor dismounting the rock.

“Is that why you are so happy?” asked Nelson with a smile.

“Sure! My soul has been in darkness long enough, I reckon. The light here makes my heart feel as it use to whenever my ship was nearing the home port, and then all us sailors used to sing the ditty which I have jest sung.”

Nelson and White stood apart from Van Dyck and Larkin who were resting themselves upon the rocks near by. White was in the best of spirits, and his witticisms were exceedingly pleasing to his companions. The faint light which threw its comforting rays about the hearts of the young men, had made Jim White very joyful. An hour later, however, when they again found themselves in total darkness, White was heard to exclaim in his agony: “God have mercy!”

All was not ended. An unexpected obstacle had presented itself. They could find no opening from the cavern, while the light which had hitherto cheered them began to fade until at last it became wholly extinguished. Everywhere were they surrounded by darkness as before. All were silent again and spoke not a word, while even the faintest echos of Jim White’s song had died away. The thunder, too, ceased to roll, and the waves broke not upon the rocks. Hope died at the same hour and became locked up in the dreadful tomb where it had previously been interred. Painful stillness reigned like a direful queen, and hated grief took possession of their hearts.

Once more Henry Nelson says: “Oh this bitter chastisement, which I must now undergo, the punishment for my past

folly. Again I am made to bear the pains and tortures of dreadful suspense, for I cannot tell what a moment will bring forth. My torch is gone; I have cast it away. It was my best friend, but I threw it aside after I had seen the light. I thought it had come to stay (the light) but alas! it was only a mockery after all. I am in despair. We can depend on nothing here. Nothing is quite constant save the darkness.

This light which I have just beheld is no more constant than a thousand other rays of hope which have occasionally come to our hearts only to vanish suddenly. Nothing thus far has proved successful to us in our bold enterprise, and when I reflect upon the details of our adventures, and consider how we have at every turn been thwarted in our endeavors to gain possession of the hidden treasures, which we have been seeking, what perils we have undergone and how much we have suffered for nothing, I am made to feel that I have struggled in vain and bitterly repent my too great ambition. And:

‘When to the sessions of sweet, silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought—’

My comrades are in deep despair. I will try to cheer them.”

When Nelson started to move toward Van Dyck he walked into a deep cavity, and being led on by natural curiosity, passed the narrow defile in the rocks, and soon found himself in a small cave in which the air seemed deliciously pure, and ahead of him a few feet only, he could hear a sound like the rippling of waters as it faintly swashed against the rocks.

Here all was darkness, but the pure air which seemed to fill the cavity, supplied him with new life and renewed his courage. He retraced his steps through the defile, through which in places he was obliged to crawl on his hands and *knees*, and summoned his companions into the little cave, *which by accident* he had found. Here all breathed freely.

## CHAPTER XX.

“To be, or not to be: that is the question.”

MOST men, I trow, had they been in my place,—given to walk again with one whom they had previously seen perish before their own eyes; to hear the welcome sound of their lost one's voice, and to know that the dead lives again,—had such been their lot, as it was mine, they would have imagined themselves in Dreamland, or perchance bethought themselves the victims of some gigantic and elaborate hoax. Had I passed through these strange adventures only in my mind, to awaken on a pleasant autumn morn to find these mysteries all a dream? Shall I raise my restless body from my couch with to-morrow's sun to learn, that I am alone in a truly lonely world, to be told by perspiring nature that the storm has but lately ceased; that the cold earth is dampened by the rain of yesterday, and that my adventures are but the ugly dream of a night, and that my marriage, just now consummated in yonder altar, is after all only the kindly mockery of an erratic and fanciful brain; and that Kate Reddington, who now stands here by my side, pouring love into my heart from out her noble soul, exists for me only in fancy, and is in reality still wearing the crown of heavenly glory?

Oh, no; it cannot be. Kate is still here, and I am truly happy because she is near me.

Our enterprise I know, is a complete failure. I pity my companions who have gained nothing by their adventures. Foolish men! I wonder where they can be roaming amid the dark dangers of these caverns. I accept my fate with a sanguine heart. I have not obtained gold, but I have found a pearl of greater price,—my happiness! With Kate beside me, to assist me, to help bear my cumbrous burdens, to share without complaint my fortunes and my misfortunes, why should I not continue to be happy, so long as I have my health? Why should any man despair amid such joys? I have lost wealth,—that which I sought—but how could

I ever part with Kate? "Oh, Kate! my darling, do not leave me again!" I cried out, throwing my strong arms about her tiny waist, and clasping her to my heart. "Do not leave me!" I pleaded.

"Never, Rudolph. Never!" she whispered; and then I knew that I was not dreaming, and felt confident that my marriage to Kate Reddington, like my whole adventure here under the sea and earth, was a reality. But how can all this joy be real? I thought it all too good to be true. Kate Reddington, I thought, is she not dead? Can Death so release those whom she has once apprehended? Certainly not until the final Resurrection, when the dead shall rise again. When the Angel of Death shall blow his wakeful trumpet on that morning, then shall the grave open, and throw up its dead in countless numbers, those buried souls of vanished centuries!

The more I reflect upon these things, the more am I puzzled in mind. I can make nothing of it. Am I really standing in the presence of her who has lately arisen from the dead? Am I mad, or dreaming, or have I long been drunk with Vanderdonk's liquor?

But soon the dark spell is broken. I find that I am neither mad, nor drunk, but am really in the presence of Kate Reddington, my wife before heaven, for as I stood meditating she said to me in her most affectionate way: "Rudolph, my husband, why do you tremble like one who is agitated? Do not be so silent and cold, and so indifferent. Tell me what troubles you."

"I am not cold, darling," I replied quickly, "do not so interpret my manner toward you. I was just then thinking, Kate, of my happiness, for it is more than bliss for me to be here with you. I am wondering if you are really my lost love brought back from death to the flesh, but when I look into your lovely eyes, and there behold the expression that I ever did see in former years, I know all this pleasure is real. Tell me Kate, with your own lips that I am not dreaming."

She laughed, and her voice was full of mirth and music. "*Do not talk in riddles, my dear husband. Have you not seen me brought back from the dead by my marriage to you?*"

I have waited here long, Rudolph, aye, I had bethought your coming a hopeless event, for as you had given me up, so I had you. I prayed daily in yonder altar. My prayer is fulfilled. Do you doubt the efficacy of prayer, Rudolph?"

"Not at all, Kate. I too Kate, have——" she stopped me.

"Do not say it, Rudolph!" she commanded; and her eyes sparkled as she spoke, with a light which shone from beneath them. "I know what motive hath sent you here. You considered me rightly dead, but the gold of the pirate king you believed still *in esse*. Thou wast mistaken, my husband. But now I will not chide you for your folly. It was I who awaited you, not gold." And with a little coquettish movement she turned her head from me, so that I beheld her lovely rich hair that streamed in soft ripples down her bridal robes, almost to her feet.

"Yes, my dearest," I said, "it was you who awaited me here below the crust of the damp earth. I am glad it is you that I find, rather than gold, or other treasures. You, my wife, are more blessed to my heart than would be the costliest jewels."

Kate turned quickly toward me as I spoke, and her voice when she answered me seemed to draw my heart toward her.

"And do you love me like that, Rudolph?" she asked, again resting her queenly head upon my shoulder. "Would you not have been more content with the gold, than with the possession thou didst gain?"

"Surely not, Kate," I replied, nervously kissing my bride, and trying in various ways to show my affection for her. "Why do you who did but a moment ago, take me unto yourself as husband, press me with such questions? Should a man so ill-use his wife as to tell her that his love for gold is greater than that which he bears for her?"

"Pardon me, my dearest," said Kate sweetly. "But you men are sometimes such beguiling creatures when in the presence of us women, and do so love to tell us about things which do not always exist in your own hearts. Not that I

distrust you, Rudolph, do I say these things, but well do I know the passion of men for gold, and I remember how meagre is their regard often for the poor women who frequently become the victims of their cruel fibs."

"Do not judge me as you would other men," I said, after she had punished me indirectly with her words.

"A woman never judges her own husband by the same criterion that she would find fault with other men," she replied.

"I had not the faintest idea that you were here, alive and in the flesh. I came for the hidden treasures; but having failed to obtain them, now, my darling, I shall return to the world with you, happier by far than when I left it. Do you not believe me?"

"Yes, Rudolph. I trust you, and could never look upon you with suspicious eyes. I could not let myself believe that you are more taken with riches, than with the woman you love. If my mind should be so taken to thinking, I would be very, very wretched."

As she finished speaking, Kate bowed her head, as if to give expression to the melancholy that for the moment flooded her mind.

When I saw that she was sad I was troubled, and said soothingly: "Do not worry that I shall ever leave you Kate; nor would I exchange you for all the gold there is in the world."

"I am glad to hear you speak to me like that," said she, "for 'tis a confession of thy heart, pure, simple, true, oh, my husband."

Kate trusted me, and I felt in my heart every symptom of happiness.

"You trust me, then?" I queried.

"Wholly, my husband." And then she looked up to me, and smiled in a manner that assured me thrice over that I was really in the presence of her whom I never again expected to see in the flesh. "Tell me now Kate, how you came here? What fate brought you into these caverns? You know why *I have come hither*. Now tell me what good fortune has *united us here* in this nether world?"

Soon she replied, and her voice was sweet and melodious, like the sound of distant bells.

"Did you not know, my husband, that my heart has ever been yours? When I fell from my boat on that ill-fated afternoon, I tried to cry out to you from beneath the waters, 'oh, Rudolph, my love, do not despair in this hour of my death! Our love shall only be made stronger by this untimely accident, and again shall we meet never to be separated by any fate.' But the salt water choked me so that I could not utter a single word, and I drifted far off into lands of sweet dreams—away where the murmur of the great, busy world is heard no more by mortals—and I floated peacefully away, where the rippling waters are heard not as they break upon the shore, until my mind was in darkest oblivion, and I saw no living creature, no spiritual shape, no unworldly image—my mind was a blank—I heard no noise, felt no touch. I was dead! Totally unconscious, I slept—for like sleep it seemed—when finally I awoke and found myself lying upon the cold rocks with darkness round and about me. I was not alone, for as I opened my eyes, I saw the ghostly figure of some female bending over me. In her hand she carried a torch-light, and I imagined that she was some beautiful mermaid or nymph of the sea whom Neptune perhaps had rejected on account of her extraordinary beauty, and had driven from old ocean into these submarine caves. Before I saw her, I had bethought myself in Hades, Rudolph, whither my soul had departed to receive such punishment as it might deserve, but in her presence I did not fear. I was saved from a cruel fate that otherwise might have awaited me here in these lonesome caves. You know the rest. How I was carried by the tide into a submarine cavern, and how I was picked up by one of the fair servants of Father Comus, Daphne by name."

"Do you not know who Daphne is?" I asked. Kate looked at me in surprise.

"No. Who is she?" she queried.

"Lenora Wallace," I replied.



"I never knew her," said Kate. "I have heard her called by no other name than Daphne."

"And Father Comus," I cried; "he is no other than Vanderdonk, the pirate."

Kate looked at me blankly.

"I do not understand you, Rudolph," she said. "What knowledge do you possess concerning these people?"

"I knew Miss Wallace several years ago. She committed suicide by leaping from the deck of a steamer into Frenchman's Bay. And——" Kate interrupted me: "Are you sure this girl, my Daphne, is the same?"

"I am sure, Kate. Miss Wallace has told me all."

Kate looked puzzled, but said nothing.

"And Vanderdonk, your Father Comus, who has married us is a pirate. He sailed with Captain Kidd two centuries ago," said I.

"The wretch!" cried Kate, and I could see that she was now angry. "The wretch! He told me that he had once been a Grecian priest, and had sat in the temple more than a thousand years ago. But I must not curse him. I dare not curse him. No, no!"

"He is an old pirate," said I, "does he not look it? He claims to be a thousand years old."

"And have you met him and talked with him?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, "and drank his liquors."

"His drugs giveth everlasting life," said Kate.

"So he says."

"And so I say, too. Otherwise I would curse him for his abominable lies. With his liquors hath he preserved me."

"I feel grateful to him, then," said I. "For had it not been for the timely administration of his drugs, our marriage might never have occurred here."

"Very true, Rudolph. I, at least, feel that I owe him much. I would go now and grasp his hand and thank him were he here. But he has gone. We shall see him no more."

"May peace go with him, and also with Lenora," said I, taking Kate's hand as she began to lead me away.

## CHAPTER XXI.

“What’s to come is still unsure.”

Out of the sanctuary wherein we had stood, Kate and I speedily withdrew, after we had loitered alone for several moments to talk over our happy union in the altar. In silence did we pass out of the light of that palatial cave, into the dark and unknown regions which are contiguous. Kate I found to be a most excellent guide, and knew the road through the caves, as well as one who had travelled it a thousand times. She, too, had traversed the course many times before. During her existence beneath the waters Kate had roamed daily through these passages within a radius of a few miles,—this child of the caves,—and had explored every cave, every chamber, every defile, where no human footsteps had ever trod before, while every rock and crevice she knew, and by them was she known, and they now seemed to recognize her as she passed them, and with their granite tongues did they try to bid her a long farewell. The darkness did not disturb her; she had long been accustomed to it. Food upon which we lived during our journey she could pluck with her hands from under the rocks; water, fresh, cool, and inspiring, seemed to bubble up from those places wherever she might stop to drink, as if the solid rock burst for no other purpose than to give up their underlying waters at her magic touch; and the interminable paths which led us on and on, brought to Kate no weariness. She could withstand the journey without fatigue. She never once complained to me about the length of the journey, or the roughness of the road. Kate was spry, and her figure darted from rock to rock as she picked her way along in the darkness. I could keep up with her only with difficulty. Our torches had now failed to omit their light, but with Kate for my guide I feared not that we should fail to find our way out of the cave. Her presence cheered me up, for I could already believe that a few hours hence we should both return to the sunlight whence we had come,—Kate a half dozen years before,—

back to the green earth above us, where we would at last live happily together, and mingle again, as once we were wont, in the gay society of the world.

"I see you know the way, Kate?" said I, still addressing her by her *cognomen*, a thing I had always done in former years.

"I have traveled these paths before to-day," she replied gayly. "I have lived here in these strange abodes for several years you know."

"Do you know the way out to the world?" I asked.

"Oh, no! I must leave that part of our journey for you to perform. I'll guide you here in the caves, but you, Rudolph, must do the rest." She looked at me, as if she questioned my ability to achieve the part imposed on me. I thought I saw sadness in her eyes, which to me was a token of disappointment that must have momentarily seized her when she considered the doubt there was connected with our escape from the caves. We had already passed through several caves of great length, but to describe them would be only to repeat what I have already said in preceeding chapters. In many, water dripped upon our heads, and dampened our clothing; and had I not been with Kate, certainly I should have felt like giving up in despair. The next cave was dry, and here Kate found a quantity of wood, and we built up a fire on the rocks. I was conjecturing how the wood could have been deposited here among the rocks, and I had said to Kate: "We must be quite near the sea."

"Why?" she asked.

"I was thinking," said I, "of the wood. Whence did it come?"

"It is driftwood," said she.

"Yes, so I perceive. I am surprised to see it here in a place bereft of all vegetation. It did not grow here, hence it must have been deposited here, either by the sea or by human hands."

"*You men*," said Kate, "are always philosophizing. I am sure I see nothing strange in the fact that we have been able to find wood here anywhere. Well, Rudolph," she added,

"I had never thought of the matter, and probably never should, had you not called my attention to it."

"Yes, I know, Kate," said I, trying to get even with her. "You women never take time to consider anything. If a thing *is*, then you are satisfied, and care nothing concerning the cause of its existence."

Kate laughed at my retort, but she began to talk in a serious manner: "I presume some fate, Rudolph, has driven it here. I have never before had use for wood here, or for food, or for water, because, you see, I have been nourished entirely by Father Comus' flagon. Is it not strange, Rudolph? In yonder cavern I looked for food. I found it. I looked for water, because we were thirsty. I found it. I cannot explain to you how it came here. I know not through what great orifice beneath the sea I came myself, when the tide swept me into these strange abodes. I fear now my husband that you must guide me hereafter. This cave is strange to me. I know it not. I have never been here before."

"Good heavens!" I cried. "I have no knowledge of these caves. We shall be lost."

"Oh, no. Do not so easily despair. Have courage. All will be well yet," said Kate, and her voice and manner were full of cheer. The thought that Kate could no longer lead the way sent a chill through my whole body. My heart grew suddenly sick, and I was standing like one wholly discouraged, brooding over my disappointment, when Kate said to me: "Have you got any matches, Rudolph?"

I opened my match-box, and found several. "Yes," I replied, "here are a dozen or more."

"Let me have them," said Kate, "and I will start a fire here. You will feel better after you are warm."

My bride was so cheerful, that she gave me confidence. So long as Kate is happy, I thought, surely I should not complain. A man should not be outstripped in the race of endurance by his opposite. A fire was soon kindled and its warmth had a benevolent effect upon my chilled body. I dried my clothing, and sat for a long time near the fire watching the shadows which the light cast among the rocks at

me. Kate had left me, and when she returned she said: "I can find none of my favorite shell fish."

"Can you find no food, Kate?" I asked in a trembling voice.

"None," she returned.

"What shall we do? If we have nothing to eat we shall starve," said I.

"Oh, never mind," said Kate, "we will get along all right, if you do not despair."

"How?" I asked, without hope. "We must eat or starve. My lunch-basket is empty."

"But the brandy," said Kate, "you still have a full bottle left. We can live on that for a long time, if we are sparing of it. Brandy, Rudolph, do you not know that it is the water of life,—*aqua vitæ*, as the Latin has it, and *eau de vie*, as the French expresses it."

I caught at her suggestion with trembling hope. "Bravo! Bravo, Kate! You're a trump," I cried. "Let us try the brandy."

"As we are out of food," replied she, "there is no other alternative left us. Prohibition must not stand in our way under circumstances of this nature. Starvation is a terrible monster, Rudolph,—more terrible even than intemperance."

I withdrew the cork from my brandy bottle, and passed it to Kate. She did not hesitate to take it. As she was about to tip the bottle, I stopped her, saying: "Before you take a draught of the liquor, Kate, please stop and reflect a moment. Remember we're in Maine."

"Yes," she replied soberly, "we're in Maine, the Banner State of Prohibition. I love the Pine Tree State for the noble cause which she has ever championed, the cause of humanity, and the salvation of men. Rudolph, I drink to the good name of Maine, and long may her people prosper."

"Kate, how dare you?" I said, somewhat surprised to hear her toast the State of Maine with my brandy.

"How dare I? What could possibly be more *comme il faut*? May the people of Maine live and prosper," said she, "even as we shall live by means of this brandy."

Kate looked vexed with me, as she had often done, but I knew that her anger could not last.

"Can we really exist here by means of this brandy?" I asked her.

"While it lasts, my husband," she replied, still cheerily. "When that is gone,—well, we must find either food or daylight before the liquor fails us. I am glad that I am not a temperance crank, Rudolph, although I thoroughly believe in the principles of prohibition, because in our case, as in many other cases, liquors sometimes become a necessity. Without this brandy, Rudolph, we should surely perish, if we stay here. Perhaps we may starve in the end, anyhow, but it is certain that a quart of brandy will prolong our existence. What may we not accomplish before the last drop is gone? Cheer up, my husband!"

"Kate, why are you so hopeful? Do you not realize that our danger is great? Our death must be a lingering one, if we remain here in these caves."

"Do not feel so badly dearest," she said, laying her hand confidently in mine. "It is always better for one to look on the bright side of life, to be sanguine even when among imminent peril. Shall we not proceed?"

"Are you not fatigued?" I asked.

"Not in the least," she replied. "Your brandy has given me new life. Do you need rest, Rudolph? If so I will watch over you while you sleep."

Her voice came to me like an angel's from heaven. How comforting were her words that she poured into my ears from time to time. She, my wife, was cheering me, when perhaps I should have been comforting her. But are there not frequently times when the wife should encourage the husband? When I had become warm by the fire and had taken a brief rest and had drank of the brandy, I felt much revived, and was stimulated to go on where darkness might lead us, for perchance we might meet my companions and all vie in the task in finding a way of escape, or if worse should come to worse, then we could all die easier by dying together. For me, if die I must, I thought, let me die in the arms of Kate. In her love could I die happy.

It was for me to lead the way now. I took her hand and led her down the rocks and in a few moments we came to a sandy bottom stretching for some distance ahead of us. The appearance of the sand gave me hope and we walked on a great distance, at least it seemed a long way to us, without either of us speaking. Suddenly we fetched up against something directly in front of us. I put out my foot to examine what it might be, and found it to be hard, though it did not feel like rock or granite.

"What have we found?" asked Kate, still holding my hand.

"I am sure I don't know," said I. "It is not a rock, but something quite large."

"Scratch a match and find out!" said Kate.

I did as requested, and holding the blazing match just ahead of me I saw a human skeleton.

"Good gracious!" cried Kate. "A man!"

A complete human skeleton was lying in the bottom of the cave. There were no remains of clothing anywhere to be seen; no foot-marks in the sand. Kate seemed much disturbed in mind at the ghastly skeleton before us.

"Oh, horrors!" she cried again, "it is the skeleton of some poor unfortunate who hath perished here. There, Rudolph, your match has gone out. Be quick! light another."

A puff of damp air had suddenly extinguished the tender flame. Whence did it come? I did not then consider, but quickly got out another and lighted it. Here at our feet we beheld the skeleton with its grinning skull outstretched upon the sand. The skull was of immense size; the frame of the body, large; and the legs were of unusual length; the teeth looked savage; the face wore a smile of death.

From the top of the cranium to the bottom of the feet the skeleton measured eight feet or more, the frame-work of him who had once been a powerful man.

"Are you not timid, my darling?" I asked Kate, as she bent forward, and strained her eyes to view the lifeless form *before her*.

"*I do not fear the dead,*" she replied promptly. *Her voice sounded afar off, as if she was answering me from the*

distance, for it seemed as if she had suddenly withdrawn from me. But as I lighted another match I beheld her still near me viewing the corsely skeleton. She looked up to me, when the match blazed forth, and smiled mysteriously.

"Why should I, a spirit clothed in the flesh, be timid when in the presence of the dead?" I did not comprehend her words. Again she looked at me strangely, and her voice became low and distant, like the wail of the wind through the forest.

"Can this be the skeleton of one of my companions?" I asked; and my words almost choked me.

"The frame is too large," said Kate; "besides, time hath removed the flesh from these bones, and the spirit that once did animate the body, hath long ago fled from these darkest confines of the earth. He was a monstrous man, indeed, who did when in the flesh move these giant limbs."

Thus she spoke, and when Kate had finished, I said: "He might have been a giant. Who knows, but this skeleton is of Norse origin? The man, perhaps, was a Norseman."

"Who, pray were the Norsemen? I have never heard of them? Tell me about them. I should certainly say that this here is the skeleton of a giant."

"The Norsemen, Kate," said I, "have you never read of them? They were old sea-kings, a race of bold and adventurous men who lived several centuries ago. It is said by some historians, that these Norsemen visited the New England coast, and settled here in the eleventh century, some four hundred years before Columbus set out from Palos to discover the Western Continent."

"There stop!" said Kate pettishly, "I shall not allow you to so pluck the laurels from the fame of the Great Discoverer. Columbus discovered America, and he should have all the honor. If these worldly historians of whom you learnedly speak, should tell me that Lord Bacon wrote the plays of Shakespeare I would no sooner believe them than I would accept the report that Columbus was not the discoverer of America. Both are absurdities. I do believe, Rudolph, that some day these wise men of the future will undertake



to rob our Savior of his birth-place, and boldly declare it was not Bethlehem at all, but perhaps bestow the sacred honor upon some one of our modern cities."

"You do not believe my story about the Norsemen true, then?" I asked.

"I do not entirely dispute you. But how strange, Rudolph, do all these things seem to me."

"I am repeating only historical facts," I said. "There is a well-accepted report afloat in the world, that these Norsemen did once inhabit some parts of the New England territory. Many traces of their occupation have been found at Mt. Desert. This skeleton here is of Norse origin I am sure, and is the last earthly remains of one of these sea-giants, who was no doubt drowned in Frenchman's Bay."

"Do you think he was really drowned?" asked Kate with a slight shudder:

"Yes."

"What a pity," she said, "that Father Comus could not have found him before he had wholly perished, and preserved him as he did me."

"The man was probably here many years before Vanderdonk was born," I replied, "or before Captain Kidd was ever heard of, or mentioned by the world. Old Vanderdonk was a pirate once, and he sailed with the world-renowned Kidd. You call him Father Comus, because he calls himself a Grecian priest. He is a cunning man by nature. He is shrewd, bold, and designing. Vanderdonk, or Comus, as you choose to call him, was too artful to be cheated by Death. Good luck followed him hitherward,—but just why the propitious gods did so attend him, to me is a mystery—and when he came here he ventured into the garden, where he discovered the drug, or fluid, or essence that hath the power to continue life indefinitely in him, or her who has once crossed the mark of mortality. To all he seems to give everlasting life, and preserves in the flesh all whom Death hath seized and hurled into these caves; and so will he preserve them until the Judgment Day. You, my love, *hath he kept well* for me, and now do I feel grateful to him

for his kindness when I find it too late to thank him in person. Once I threatened to shoot him like a dog, and he laughed at me. I tried to shoot his animals, but failed. Now I understand why he mocked me when I drew my revolver in anger, and why our bullets did not kill the animals that we had tried so hard to shoot, and why we had failed to catch his fish, and why we had not got a second shot at the monster birds that we had seen near the shore of the stream over which we had once sailed. You, my noble wife, hath this man miraculously preserved in the same flesh and blood which your Creator did give you, and on this account, at least, will I ever sing praises unto the good name of Vanderdonk, who is a cruel pirate no longer, but clean are his hands and pure his heart now freed from sin. Come, dearest Kate, let us hasten from this tomb where the dead repose."

Then as I finished speaking, another match which I had lighted went out, and the dusky curtains of the darkened cavern were unfolded, and every shape became invisible as objects fade from sight in the darkness of night. The skeleton buried its deathly visage in the sand, and the Invisible Spirit watched over it.

Again as we advanced, my right foot accidentally struck against something in front of me which gave forth a tin-like sound when I kicked it a second time. Another match was instantly lighted, and to my astonishment, I saw lying upon the sand near my feet a torch. It was like the torches that we had been using and like those that we had brought with our expedition. I eagerly picked it up and examined the lamp part, which to my joy was half-filled with oil. I lighted it, and quickly the darkness fled before us.

Kate was near me, and I feasted my eyes upon her gracious beauty, for I had not seen her face for a long time. Then I looked around. I saw foot-marks all about me. They were all the same size, and this fact assured me that the foot-marks had been made by a single man. The torch had been thrown away by one whom perhaps the darkness had driven mad, and had in his despair disposed of his only light and rushed forward to seek immediate relief from present suffering

by death. These foot-marks made numerous circles in the sand, showing that the man's mind must have been dazed at the time, and that he had not known the way forward or backward. The tracks, too, were of recent make, which caused me to believe that they were the foot-marks of one of my companions who had lost his way. My first impulse was to find him, and I searched eagerly about. We had a light now and could see some little distance ahead of us. The foot-marks after having made numerous circles and semicircles in the sand, started off like a tangent, and we followed the circuitous course of the straggler, until the tracks left the sand entirely and disappeared among the rocks, which lay rough and broken along the sides of the monster cavern. Huge rocks lay piled one upon the other, but we climbed over them with ease. Here we came to the side of the cavern. A hundred chambers seemed to lead out from this place, but we knew not which one to take. We paused a moment to consider.

## CHAPTER XXII.

“Thus far, with rough and all-uneven pen,  
Our bending author hath pursued the story,—”

NEAR a huge boulder that projected out from the walls of the cave, Kate and I had paused to contemplate the chambers or galleries before us, leading out in various directions. We had found no man as yet; no signs of humanity anywhere, after losing sight of the foot-prints. Either the wanderer had made good his escape, or else he had succumbed to fatigue, or perished here among the rocks. We had anticipated his awful death in such a dreadful place, since here no man could ever know what end he made, with Hunger, Fatigue, Fear, Cold and Darkness—these awful sisters—locked arm in arm about him; with no companion to cheer him; with no friend save God. Who could he be? *A thousand different answers flashed through my brain, and as each passed, I shuddered.* Had one of my friends, either

Nelson, or Van Dyck, or Mattocks, perished here? Did the torch and the foot-prints belong to one of our sailors? Had White,—always timid in the dark—died here? But I could not force myself to think that White would get so far away from his companions as to lose them, so I did not consider him very long. Perhaps, however, Larkin—ever bold—might have strayed away for some purpose, and got lost, though I had sooner believed that Nelson might be the unfortunate one, inasmuch as he had always shown a particular love for personal explorations. He had always managed to keep a short distance ahead of his companions when on the march, and I had thought that perhaps now he had carelessly become separated from his friends, and had wandered hither only to die. These painful imaginations made my head dizzy, and my heart grew horridly sick. The very thought of any of my friends, who had accompanied me on this unsuccessful expedition, perishing here in this dismal place I could not tolerate; but it is too often that against one's will, grief enters into one's heart. The fact that Kate and I had found a torch here in the sand, and had seen with our own eyes, whose sight we could not very well dispute, human foot-prints, were strong circumstances tending to prove that some one of our companions had recently been here, while other facts concerning the tracks, already stated at length, sufficiently proved to our minds that the man had lost his way,—a circumstance not at all improbable here in these caves—and had perhaps died here. I believed that the man had perished, for I could imagine, then, no way of escape for him. Who was he? I stood sadly meditating. A man is never so weak, nor a woman either for that matter, as when entertaining anxiety for friends, and now under this terrible strain of fear my strong nerves deserted me, and in some respects I became a child.

Suddenly a voice made me start.

"Did you speak, Kate?"

My wife replied in the negative.

"Then I imagined it," said I. "Did you hear nothing?"

"I heard no voice," answered Kate.

I was about to step toward the mouth of the tunnel, gaping in front of me, when distinctly I heard the same noise. It was a groan.

"Now I hear it," said Kate. "Listen!"

The noise ceased. It had come from the darkness, but as the voice was so faint as to be quite inaudible, I knew that if a man was in distress he must be close by. I made my way forward a short distance, falling over the rocks under my feet: and ahead of me. I caught sight of some object stretched out upon the rocks. I told Kate to follow me the best she could, and I found her to be as fleet of foot as myself: for when I paused before the object to examine whether or not it was human. I found Kate by my side ready to offer any assistance that might be asked of her, if indeed any should be wanted. As it happened our aid was required, for here lay a man either dead, or dying by fatigue and hunger. I told Kate to hold the torch-light, while I made an examination. The man lay perfectly quiet like one dead, but as I pressed my ear closer, I heard him breathing. He was asleep.

There was no hat on his head, and his feet, which were nearly devoid of shoes and stockings, I noticed were scratched and bruised, and were bleeding from numerous wounds. I saw blood stains upon the rocks. It was evident that the man, whoever he should prove to be, had been a great sufferer: and finally overcome by fatigue or extreme hunger, or thirst, perhaps all, he had thrown himself down to die. His right arm lay peacefully across his face, so that I could not see his countenance, and he was lying with his back toward me. I turned the man over. He groaned as I did so; I saw his face. It was pale, worn, and haggard. His face bore the marks of bitter distress. I asked Kate to hold the torch nearer, and as she quickly obeyed me, I saw the man's face and recognized him. I staggered back against the rocks behind me, like one in a swoon, and when I caught my breath again, I uttered a cry of astonishment.

*Instantly all my strength left me, and my legs tottered, as if they would let my body fall into the mangled rocks under my feet. I would have fallen flat had not the rocks*

behind me given me support. Kate, too, had at the same time grasped me by the arm, and held me firmly.

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "What ails you, Rudolph?"

"That man!" I gasped. "The man is——"

"Who?" she asked, interrupting me.

"*MATTOCKS!*" I cried out wildly, and I heard my voice echo across the cavern.

At the sound of his name Mattocks, my dear friend, whom I had believed dead, awoke; and again I heard him groan. He was evidently enduring intense pain.

Instantly, I was on my feet again. My friend was alive! yes, alive, and I had found him in time to rescue him from death. He was, however, in danger. I raised him up, and he opened his eyes and stared at me wildly. His mind was wandering. Had he gone mad? Soon I was relieved from all fear when he said: "My God, Rudolph Sanborn,—is it really you?"

"I have come to save you, my friend, from an awful death," said I. "My wife, Kate Reddington, is with me."

"Then I am surely mad, or dreaming. Wife? woman? Kate Reddington! who is she?"

Mattocks was confused. His experience had been a more hopeless one than mine. No woman had spoken loving words in his ear; none had come to rescue him, or help lighten his burden in these dreary caves. Alone and single handed he had fought darkness, hunger and fatigue with the hope of finding his friends. He, too, had failed in that which he had undertaken.

"Kate is my wife," I replied. "I found her here beneath the sea."

"Have you found the gold?"

"Yes."

"Good! how much?" Mattocks' eyes began to brighten at the good news I was telling him, for once in the presence of one of his friends he took heart again, and thought now of the object of our coming here.

But he became sad again, when I told him that we had been prevented from taking the gold away by the giant *Saga*.

"Then all is lost," he said grievously.

"Our expedition is a failure," I answered.

"Just as I thought it would be. Here tear up this confounded old parchment."

Mattocks passed me the letter signed E. L (Everard Lehane).

"The letter is true," said I. "Do not destroy it."

"Are you sure it is true?" he asked, sitting upright for the first time after he had swallowed a few drops of my brandy.

"Oh, yes," I replied. "We have found the gold of Captain Kidd, but the letter did not mention Saga, the giant. He is a monster who keeps a constant watch over the gold. This E. L. who wrote the letter—his full name is Everard Lehane."

"I will keep the letter, then," said Mattocks, folding it up and placing it back into his pocket. "Curse the old giant! curse him, I say!"

"Have you seen Van Dyck or Nelson?" I asked.

"I have seen nobody. I have been hunting everywhere for you, and now that I had just given up the hunt, and laid myself down here to rest, you came to me. I should have taken my rest before."

"Then you do not know where our friends are?" I inquired.

"I have seen no man; only the skeleton of a man whom I took to be yourself, Sanborn. I had imagined that you had perished yonder in the sand."

"Then you saw the skeleton?" I asked.

"Yes; the sight of it made me half mad, for easily could I believe that very soon I too must lay myself down here to die and decay. In my madness I threw away my torch, that I might be able to see nothing of the sand, or rocks which must sooner or later cover my fleshless bones."

"Kate and I found the torch, and by means of its light have been able to trace you to this place," said I.

"Then my time has not come," said Mattocks, and he *laughed at the thought of his being saved.* "I thought I *was going to die sure.*"

"And so shall we all perish, unless we find our way back to the world," I said earnestly.

"Have you no food? I am hungry," asked Mattocks.

"Not a morsel. Nothing to keep life agog, save this half bottle of brandy."

"Let us be thankful for that much," said Mattocks cheerily.

"Perhaps we may be able to find a passage here leading out into the world."

It was strange to find that Mattocks was as much in love with Kate, my wife, that is, apparently, as I was myself when we had been passing together through one of the long galleries which led out from the cavern where we had found him. Kate was most agreeable, I admit, and talked to Mattocks like a dear friend. I was not at any time jealous, not even when I heard Mattocks pay her compliments for her beauty and her kindness. Under such circumstances as these a man could not naturally be jealous, for we three people seemed to each other as but one, here in this lonely place, and Kate herself seemed to me more like a sister, though in reality she was my beloved wife. I did not harbor for my friend feelings of resentment, even when I heard him call her in my presence a noble and high-minded creature, as good at heart as she was beautiful in face and figure.

The time and place as well as the circumstances under which certain words are spoken often change their tenor and meaning, and are then construed as they should be, literally. I loved Kate; hence I trusted her, and my confidence in her was not misplaced. She loved me in return and held undying respect for any or all of my companions, whom she well knew were most dear to me. Her presence cheered Mattocks as it did me, only perhaps in a less degree. Kate was extremely pretty. Mattocks, like every man, recognized her charms, her fascinating ways, and her cheerful disposition; and as is natural for one whose heart is ebullient with respect for those whom one greatly admires, Mattocks had expressed his opinion of Kate in seemingly strong language, and had said to me: "Rudolph, your wife is very handsome. Her face is exquisite, and she has eyes——"



'Whose depths unravel the coiled night  
And see the stars at noon.'

Other men, I trow, have often spoken in like manner of women whom they admired without arousing the jealousy of their husbands. Mattocks only spoke the truth concerning Kate, and I received such complimentary outbursts in the same spirit which prompted them.

Separated entirely from the world; away from the pleasant surroundings of home, friends and loved ones; here in the darkest confines of the earth, where no light ever penetrates, I was, nevertheless, passing the happiest moments of my life. How strange did all this happiness seem to me! Again I paused to ask myself: "Am I awake? Is all this happiness a dream?" If it be a dream, I thought, then may it always last, and may I never awake from sleep to look again upon the cold gray earth; may I never be permitted to see the sunlight creeping into my chamber through the half-drawn curtains; may I never awake to hear again the noisy clatter of the busy world, and to walk forth into the crowded streets of the city amid the whirl of business strife, and to endure the painful and tedious routine of worldly life without the companionship of my own wife, Kate Reddington. But when I stand here staring with the eyes of mind into blackest darkness, reviewing my adventures under the sea, and recalling vividly the perils through which I have already passed; what dangers I have borne and shun, all with the same fearless heart, and what suffering I have endured for the sake of a wild and hopeless enterprise, and what hardships my companions have bravely withstood here in darkest earth, again do I shudder lest the past may repeat itself; lest my wife may be suddenly taken away from me again as she was on that beautiful afternoon when she lost her balance and fell from my boat into the bottomless sea at Mt. Desert.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next cave into which we came was short compared *with the others* wherein we had wandered, being according to

my own judgment, and as I remember it now, about a quarter of a mile in length.

Our torch was still burning so that we could yet see our way about, but presently its light was extinguished by a violent puff of air that swept through the cave like a heavy gust of wind. Our torch-light was out. We were in the dark.

"Where are you Kate?" I called to my wife, after our only light had gone out.

"Here, here I am my husband," she immediately replied with strange tenderness; "here by your side, Rudolph."

"Where did the wind come from, do you think?" asked Mattocks in a trembling voice. "Can it be possible that this cave really opens into the boundless air of the world?"

"All things are possible, my friend," I replied. "I am sure that the wind has found its way here by way of the mouth of the cave. The air has come in such a voluminous shape."

I was at the moment of my speaking, near the side of the cave, and now and then I could feel the air lightly fanning my cheeks which were flushed by the excitement of the hour. Whence did it come? How? I advanced a few steps toward the side of the cave to see if I could find an opening in the wall, and I directly walked into a narrow defile which seemed to lead me from the cave. Kate was near me, but Mattocks for some reason had remained a short way behind. I called to him to follow us, and he obeyed the call. We had gone but a short way, however, when Mattocks said to me: "I hear voices. Listen!" As we listened we heard men engaged in heated conversation, and their voices sounded to us like the wind talking in the narrow defile. But the voices grew louder and more distinct as we moved forward to the end of the defile.

At last I found myself in the pale light of a small cave, where fresh air—God be praised!—greeted me, and here four pairs of astonished eyes looked wildly into mine.

I found myself to my knees in water, and through what appeared to be a narrow crevice, cutting the mouth of the

cave horizontally, I saw the light. I heard the water swashing against the rocks, and when I had recovered from my surprise, I climbed upon the rocks where sat Van Dyck, Nelson, White and Larkin. I heard Mattocks who was following me come splashing into the water, and my companions laughed loudly at his downfall. Immediately there was a sound of falling rocks and earth behind me, which came down from the roof of the cave, landing in front of the entrance through which Mattocks and I had just come, closing it to all future visitors.

When my companions had recovered from their fright they began to cheer us loudly. But to me danger still existed. I could see no way of escape even now. Then I began slowly to realize that we were in a \*cave opening into the sea, but the tide was rising I thought, and soon the water would close up the mouth of the cave, thereby shutting off the air; and then we must perish either for the want of air or be drowned by the water. The passage being stopped, there seemed no possible way of escape for us, and once more I imagined the Angel of Death hovering about us.

"Where are we boys?" I asked with a trembling voice. "Do you know?"

"We are in a cave that opens into the sea," said Van Dyck.

"But the tide is rising. We shall all perish here unless we get out of the cave," I said excitedly.

"The tide is ebbing," answered Van Dyck.

"Then we shall be saved!" I exclaimed, greatly overjoyed with the thought of again seeing the sunlight. My companions rejoiced with me.

"Yes," said Van Dyck, "we shall be able to return to New York by the evening train."

"The world shall know of our adventures this very day," said Nelson, moving toward the mouth of the cave.

"It shall never know the whole story," put in Mattocks decidedly. "My personal adventures in yonder caverns shall never be told."

*\*A cavern on one of the Porcupine Islands near Bar Harbor, Maine. It is accessible only at low water.*

The broker's son, during the conversation of his companions, seemed meditative, and one who observed him might have easily detected that any proposed reference to the expedition, which had now been demonstrated a failure, was unpleasant to him.

My joy on meeting my companions had exceedingly unnerved me, and in my excitement I had for the time forgotten to look for Kate. I was then too happy over the thought of being once more alive with my companions to anticipate any coming ill. My feelings were those of the man, who having been incarcerated for many years in some loathsome prison, finds that he is soon to be given his freedom. I was thinking of the happiness that would soon be mine, when with my wife and companions I could go back to the world.

The earth would then look brighter to me than ever before.

My thoughts had led my mind away from present surroundings to pleasures that would be mine in the future.

It was then that I thought for the first time since meeting Nelson and Van Dyck, to look for Kate. When I did not see her, I called to her by name, but there was no response. "My God!" I cried out in despair, "What has become of her? Have you not seen her Mattocks?"

My friend eyed me strangely, and shook his head.

Nelson and Van Dyck did not understand me, and appeared amazed at my strange conduct.

Kate was nowhere in the cave, and suddenly I realized that she had been left behind in the passage-way, perhaps to perish. I grew faint and weak; my brain was turned and I lost all consciousness. I had fallen down upon the rocks in a swoon. When I again opened my eyes, to my astonishment, Kate was hovering over me like a beautiful angel.

"Dearest Kate," I asked, when I had regained strength enough to speak to her, "where have you been? I had thought you lost to me."

"I am ever with you, my love," she replied "Not in the flesh as you have lately seen me, but in spirit only. A chasm dark and wide separates us from worldly bliss, but not even

---

# BAR HARBOR RECORD.

---

A bright, enterprising and original weekly paper,  
CIRCULATION LARGEST IN THE COUNTY, devoted to the  
best interests of Mt. Desert Island and Hancock County.

The RECORD makes a feature, during the summer  
months, of its SOCIETY DEPARTMENT, which contains a  
carefully edited report of the doings of the summer visi-  
tors to Mt. Desert Island and the Frenchman's Bay  
Resorts.

• • Published at Bar Harbor, Maine. • •

Subscription, \$1.50 a year; \$1.00 for six months.  
Liberal terms will be made with advertisers.

The JOB PRINTING facilities have been enlarged to  
meet the increasing demand for fine work.

---

# ST. SAUVEUR,



TERMS—Single Rooms, \$16 to \$21 per week; Double Rooms, \$30 to \$38 per week, according to season and location; Private Parlors, \$15 to \$20 per week; Board, \$12 per week; Transient, 3.50 per day.  
For further particulars as to terms, etc., address,

**ALLEY BROS., BAR HARBOR, MAINE.**

---

## GEORGE H. GRANT,

(Successor to GEO. W. FISKE,)

**E, MARINE, LIFE and ACCIDENT INSURANCE,**

**ELLSWORTH, MAINE.**

---

## CRESSEY & JONES,

DEALERS IN

**PIANOS AND ORGANS,**

Sheet Music and General Musical Merchandise.

**340 CONGRESS STREET,**

**NITE CITY HALL.**

**PORTLAND, ME**

---

— THE —

# MAINE CENTRAL R.R.

"THE RENOWNED VACATION LINE" OF AMERICA,

— FORMS THE —

GREAT TRUNK LINE OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND,

Being the Favorite Route of Travel between

PORTLAND AND MONTREAL,

AND THE ONLY

— INTERNATIONAL LINK —

CONNECTING THE UNITED STATES AND MARITIME PROVINCES.

This Road now has a DIRECT LINE from PORTLAND to QUEREC the great thoroughfare of SUMMER PILGRIMAGE for everybody seeking rest or recreation. Offering

## WHITE MOUNTAINS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE,

Including JEFFERSON, LITTLETON, BETHLEHEM, PROFILE HOUSE, FABYAN'S, CRAWFORD'S, NORTH CONWAY and GLEN HOUSE, together with PORTLAND, (Casco Bay), SEBAGO LAKE, POLAND SPRINGS, RANGELEY, BAR HARBOR, SORRENTO, and beyond MOOSEHEAD, ST. ANDREWS, ST. JOHN and HALIFAX.

— ALSO, —

Operates the PORTLAND, MT. DESERT & MACHIAS STEAMBOAT CO., with steamer "CITY OF RICHMOND," leaving Portland Tuesday and Friday evenings at 11 P. M., and Machiasport Monday and Thursday mornings at 4 A. M.

**F. E. BOOTHBY,**

G. P. and T. A., Portland, Me.

**PAYSON TUCKER,**

Vice-Pres. and Gen'l Manager.





C

b

r

c

t

!





C

t

1

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.



